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LORD BYRON IN HIS LETTERS
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LORD BYRON IN HIS LETTERS

SELECTIONS FROM HIS LETTERS AND
JOURNALS

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LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1927

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INTRODUCTION

DURING the War a request from a friend, then in France, to send him "a sound edition of Byron's "letters in one volume," led eventually to the making of this selection. Lord Ernle's magnificent and scholarly edition of the *Letters and Journals*¹ in six volumes was known to me. But this work—essential to the student of Byron and his epoch—was, by the terms of the commission, ruled out, and to my surprise I was unable to find any collection that satisfied the given requirements. There were, of course, the letters included in Moore's *Life* of Byron, published a century ago, of which editions are still obtainable. No one should speak disparagingly of the *Life* as such. But my friend had asked for letters only, and moreover I hesitated to send him, unless it was necessary *en faute de mieux*, the product of an age when editors had very little scruple in excising a passage in a letter or even joining together parts of two different letters. There was also FitzGreene Halleck's American collection, of seventy years ago—but based mainly on Moore's book, hard to obtain, bulky, and

¹ 1908—supplemented since by the two volumes of Sir John Murray's *Lord Byron's Correspondence*, 1922.

in execrably small type. Finally there was W. E. Henley's fragmentary volume, which did not go beyond 1813, and was also out of print. In short, for anyone who lacked the time or money for Lord Ernle's edition, there existed virtually no collection of the letters which are among the best—are perhaps, with Charles Lamb's, the best—in the language.

To fill that gap is the object of the present book. Its particular aim is to give a selection which, while supplying specimens of Byron's art as a letter writer, may provide a running commentary on his life, his character, and his poetry. Such a scheme is feasible in the case of Byron as perhaps of no other writer. Owing to an unusual combination of circumstances a great wealth of material is extant. In the first place, Byron loved correspondence. Moreover, his seven years' exile in Italy often caused him to write letters, for which, if he had been in England, and able to see his friends and acquaintances, there would have been no occasion. Thirdly, the fact of his having attained celebrity so early—with the publication of *Childe Harold* when he was only twenty-three—resulted in many of his correspondents' preserving his letters from the beginning of their relations with him.

I am not so confident as to hope that the selections given here will satisfy all those who are familiar with Byron's life and writings. No taste or judgment of one person in such a matter will always commend itself to another. I can only trust that such disappointments as are provoked

will generally be by acts of omission rather than commission. For charity can then be claimed for an editor who, from the very nature of his aim (a single volume of reasonable extent), was always working under the haunting limitation of space.

The text followed throughout is that of R. E. Prothero's (Lord Ernle's) *Letters and Journals* of Byron, except in fourteen letters (Nos. 17, 19, 33, 39, 40, 50, 71, 83, 88, 97, 100, 106, 107, 110) printed from Sir John Murray's *Lord Byron's Correspondence*, for leave to include which acknowledgment is due to Mr. Roger Ingpen. My debt throughout to Lord Ernle's edition—as that of anyone who deals with Byron must inevitably be—is immense, in both text and notes. But for Lord Ernle's work, which in its turn made use of a mass of material accumulated by Sir John Murray and Sir John Murray's father and grandfather, execution of my scheme would have been laborious and difficult—if not impossible.

As I detest all bowdlerisation, I am sorry that it has not been in my power to restore some omissions (indicated in the text by asterisks). Most of these were made by Moore from letters of which the originals have apparently been destroyed.

I have tried to trace and give references to all quotations, but some have eluded me.

For much valuable help and advice I am indebted to several friends—in particular Mrs. Edward Thomas and Mr. Charles Williams—and also to correspondents who through the

columns of *Notes and Queries* have supplied references to Byron's quotations.

It is obvious as we read Byron's letters that he wrote them on the spur of the moment in careless mood. They move rapidly from point to point—philosophical, practical; meditative, descriptive; jocular, satirical, indignant—telling with gusto anything that his mind is full of or that he thinks will interest his reader. We look in vain, says Macaulay, for instances of stiffness in language and awkwardness in transition in these letters, which are “less affected than those of Pope and Walpole, and have more matter in them than those of Cowper,” and he adds that, if Byron's epistolary style was artificial, it was a rare and admirable instance of the highest art which cannot be distinguished from nature.

The letters reveal many traits that are in startling variance from the traditional picture of Byron to which Macaulay refers in his essay, and which still survives—that of a gloomy sensualist, a dandified poseur, whose languor gives way now and then to outbursts of atheism and misanthropy. The caricature (for which his poetry to some extent supplied the basis) has been zealously preserved by detractors, who, even today, after a century, still resent the celebrity and success that, during a portion of his career, were showered on a sinner. The resentment is not altogether unrelated to the unholy joy which at the turning point of his popularity gloated

over the scandal caused by his separation from his wife. Moreover, the world finds it easier to be charitable when the sinner comes to a bad end ; Byron's career ended in glory.

In the letters we see, instead of languor, the great mental and physical activity of a man who led a crowded and intense life, with varied interests—from writing, reading, travelling, business, politics, to boxing, fencing, riding, sailing, and swimming the Hellespont. (As a counterpoise the detractors can add—that he loved too often, and ate too little.) Instead of melancholy and self-pity we find ourselves in the company of vivacity, and often of boisterous humour. This does not mean that at bottom Byron was not of a melancholy cast. That shrewd observer, Sir Walter Scott, says : “ The flashes of mirth, gaiety, “ indignation, or satirical dislike, which frequently “ animated Lord Byron's countenance, might, “ during an evening's conversation, be mistaken “ by a stranger for its habitual expression, so “ easily and so happily was it formed for them ; “ but those who had an opportunity of studying “ his features for a length of time, and upon “ various occasions, both of rest and emotion, “ will agree with us, that their proper language “ was that of melancholy.” In some of the passages of his journals Byron mentions his tendency to depression. But this does not show itself in the letters. A strong, almost austere, sense of social obligation forbade him to reveal it in his relations with people. “ *Larmoyant* ” is his disdainful phrase for a person who does so ; in a

similar vein, in a letter to Hobhouse, referring to the deaths within one month of his mother and two friends, he adds, "Here I am, wretched, "but not melancholy or gentlemanlike."

Indeed, whenever he comes to his troubles, capacities, and achievements, meiosis and even self-ridicule are his customary modes of expression. In speaking of his own publications he frequently uses the word "poeshie" for "poetry." Success never turned his head. He did not believe that anything he had written would live. He was wrong here—as he was also in his estimate of Keats, of Coleridge, of Wordsworth. But he genuinely believed that poetry was not his true vocation. And it is a fact that, whereas with many poets we feel that they had to write poetry, and could not have been anything else but poets, it is easy to conceive Byron as a great soldier, politician, or explorer.

In his early days of authorship, even when in money straits, he refused to keep for himself the sums that he received for his poetry, but handed them over to his friends. In his usual self-depreciatory way he asserts in one of his journals that he has not a capacity for friendship. A large number of the twelve hundred letters in Lord Ernle's edition afford internal and external evidence which rebuts that self-accusation.

The courage to bring his cynicism to bear even on himself is an example of his sincerity. "The "first thing you have to do," says Ruskin, "in "reading Byron to purpose, is to remember his "motto, 'Trust Byron.' You always may; and

“ the more, that he takes some little pleasure
“ at first in offending you. But all he says is
“ true, nevertheless, though what worst there is
“ of him to tell, he insists upon at once ; and
“ what good there may be, mostly leaves you to
“ find out. To the end of his life, he had a
“ schoolboy’s love of getting into mischief : and
“ a general instinct for never doing anything he
“ was bid ; which extends up even as far as the
“ commandments themselves. But he neither
“ recommends you to break them, nor equivocates
“ in the smallest degree to himself about what
“ they are.”

The letters open up a panorama which includes a procession of many famous men and women of the time—Shelley, Scott, Goethe, Stendhal, Trelawny, Moore, Leigh Hunt, Lord Holland, Napier, Count d’Orsay—Lady Melbourne, Lady Blessington, Lady Caroline Lamb, Lady Oxford, Lady Jersey. We follow the writer on his pilgrimage through life—Aberdeen ; Harrow ; the Albany ; the Grand Tour—Portugal, Athens, Constantinople, the Troad ; Dover Pier, and exile ; Brussels, and Lausanne, and the Alps ; Venice, Rome, Verona, Pisa, Genoa ; and the last journey, to Greece. The letters cease. We have come to the end of our companionship with him. The last scene we can only learn of from others. By the swamps of fever-laden Missolonghi, in a terrific thunderstorm, the soul of Byron leaves his body. A few days later, to the salute of funeral guns, the body is taken back to England—to his country, which, no less than other coun-

tries, sometimes reviles its great sons—and sometimes afterwards makes amends. It is brought to London. The gates of Westminster Abbey remain closed. From the censure of priests we can turn—for consolation, if necessary—to something of greater significance. Passionately Byron had lived, and passionately he died. As lover, poet, and rebel he had stirred the imagination of all kinds of people, and at his death something of his own passion entered into the cry that rang through Europe—"Byron is dead!"

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LORD BYRON IN HIS LETTERS

I

SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

(1798-1808)

THE period covered by the letters in this first section begins when Byron was ten years old, and extends to the year in which he left Cambridge, and had published his first book. The correspondents are his mother ; his aunt, Mrs. Parker ; John Hanson—who was to be his man of business—and Hanson's son, Hargreaves ; a Cambridge friend, William Bankes ; Charles Dallas, a connection by marriage, who afterwards was closely associated with Byron over the publication of *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* and *Childe Harold* ; and his half-sister Augusta, round the precise nature of whose relations with him, and their possible bearing on Byron's separation from his wife, there has beaten a storm of controversy.

Byron's mother, Catherine Gordon, was descended from James I of Scotland. Her father committed suicide—as also possibly did her husband, Captain John Byron, a spendthrift, whom she married in 1785. Captain Byron had been previously married to the divorced wife of

the Marquis of Carmarthen, who died in 1784, leaving a daughter, Augusta. George Gordon Byron, the poet, was born in 1788; three years later Captain Byron died.

Mrs. Byron was living in Aberdeen when she became a widow. Her fortune had been impoverished by her husband's extravagance. In 1794, by the death of a great uncle, Byron succeeded to the title. The financial situation became easier, but Newstead Abbey had to be let, and the Rochdale property could only be recovered by a law-suit. Mrs. Byron settled at Nottingham, and afterwards at other places.

She treated her child with alternate excess of violence and tenderness. It was said that she reviled him as a "lame brat," to which he replied, "I was born so, Mother."

In attempting to have her son's lameness cured, Mrs. Byron consulted numerous specialists and paid large sums of money. The exact nature of the deformity has been the subject of a strange variety of opinion. Several of Byron's friends, including Moore, never knew which foot was deformed. Jackson, with whom he boxed, thought it was the left; and so stated Dr. Millingen, who examined him after his death. Lord Ernle comes to the conclusion that he suffered from what would now be described as infantile paralysis, which affected the minor muscles of the right leg and foot, and rendered him permanently lame. The defect did not seriously hamper Byron's physical activity. He played cricket for Harrow against Eton; rode, boxed, fenced; and was

an extremely strong swimmer. But perhaps prolonged walking was painful, and a sense of his disability to move gracefully may account for the unexpected puritanism of his diatribe on ballroom dancing in his poem "The Waltz."¹

In the first three letters the confident and flowing style, for a boy under twelve, is remarkable; and the letter written from Harrow, when he was sixteen, already shows signs of that swiftness and vigour which mark Byron's mature epistolary style.

Byron's first volume of verse, *Fugitive Pieces*, was printed privately in 1806, during the time he was at Cambridge. A revised edition, under the title *Poems on Various Occasions*, was issued in the following year, and a few months later he published *Hours of Idleness* (containing some of the poems which had previously appeared). It was the criticism of *Hours of Idleness*, in the *Edinburgh Review* (Jan. 1808), which stung Byron to compose his satire, *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*, which was published in March 1808, and at once made its mark.

I. To Mrs. Parker

NEWSTEAD ABBEY, Nov. 8th, 1798.

DEAR MADAM,—My Mamma being unable to write herself desires I will let you know that the potatoes are now ready and you are welcome to them whenever you please.

¹ The latest attempt to clear up the uncertainties about Byron's lameness is contained in an address by Dr. H. C. Cameron to the Royal Society of Medicine (see the *British Medical Journal*, March 31st, 1923).

She begs you will ask Mrs. Parkyns ¹ if she would wish the poney to go round by Nottingham or to go home the nearest way as it is now quite well but too small to carry me.

I have sent a young Rabbit which I beg Miss Frances will accept off and which I promised to send before. My Mama desires her best compliments to you all in which I join.

I am, Dear Aunt, yours sincerely, BYRON.

I hope you will excuse all blunders as it is the first letter I ever wrote.

2. *To his Mother*

NOTTINGHAM, 13 March, 1799.

DEAR MAMA.—I am very glad to hear you are well. I am so myself, thank God ; upon my word I did not expect so long a Letter from you ; however I will answer it as well as I can. Mrs. Parkyns and the rest are well and are much obliged to you for the present. Mr. Rogers ² could attend me every night at a separate hour from the Miss Parkynses, and I am astonished you do not acquiesce in this Scheme which would keep me in Mind of what I have almost entirely forgot. I recommend this to you because, if some plan of this kind is not adopted, I shall be called, or rather branded with the name of a dunce, which you know I could never bear. I beg you will consider this plan seriously and I will lend it all the assistance in my power. I shall be very glad to

¹ With whom he was going to stay at Nottingham.

² A tutor, with whom Byron read the classics. Byron was in Nottingham in order to be under the care of a surgeon who treated misshapen limbs.

see the Letter you talk of, and I have time just to say I hope every body is well at Newstead,
And remain, your affectionate Son, BYRON.

P.S.—Pray let me know when you are to send in the horses to go to Newstead. May¹ desires her Duty and I also expect an answer by the miller.

3. *To John Hanson*²

DR. GLENNIE'S SCHOOL, LORDSHIP LANE,
DULWICH, *August 1799.*

SIR,—I am not a little disappointed at your Stay, for this last week I expected you every hour ; but, however, I beg it as a favour that you will come up soon from Newstead as the Holidays commence in three weeks Time. I congratulate you on Capt. Hanson's being appointed commander of The *Brazen* Sloop of War, and I congratulate myself on Lord Portsmouth's Marriage, hoping his Lady, when he and I meet next, will keep him in a little better order.³ The manner I knew that Capt. Hanson was appointed Commander of the Ship before mentioned was this. I saw it in the public Paper, and now, since you are going to

¹ Mrs. Gray, Byron's nurse. Hanson, in a letter to Mrs. Byron, stated that she had neglected and ill-treated Byron.

² Hanson, a solicitor, was engaged by Mrs. Byron to look after the financial interests of her son. Byron spent some of his holidays at the Hansons' house in Earl's Court. Capt. James Hanson was brother of John Hanson.

³ When Lord Portsmouth was staying with the Hansons, he had pinched Byron's ear. Byron picked up a conch shell which was lying on the ground, and threw it at Lord Portsmouth's head. On Mrs. Hanson's trying to make the peace by saying that the missile had not been meant for Lord Portsmouth, Byron exclaimed, " But I *did* mean it ! I will teach a fool of " an earl to pinch another noble's ear."

Newstead, I beg if you meet Gray send her a packing as fast as possible, and give my Compliments to Mrs. Hanson and to all my comrades of the Battalions in and out upon different Stations,
And remain, your little friend, BYRON.

I forgot to tell you how I was. I am at present very well and my foot goes but indifferently ; I cannot perceive any alteration.

4. *To his Mother*

HARROW-ON-THE-HILL,
Sunday, May 1st, 1803.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I received your Letter the other day. And am happy to hear you are well. I hope you will find Newstead in as favorable a state as you can wish. I wish you would write to Sheldrake to tell him to make haste with my shoes.

I am sorry to say that Mr. Henry Drury¹ has behaved himself to me in a manner I neither *can* nor *will bear*. He has seized now an opportunity of showing his resentment towards me. To day in church I was talking to a Boy who was sitting next me ; *that* perhaps was not right, but hear what followed. After Church he spoke not a word to me, but he took this Boy to his pupil room, where he abused me in a most violent manner, called me *blackguard*, said he *would* and *could* have me expelled from the School, and bade me thank his *Charity* that *prevented* him ; this was the

¹ The son of Dr. Joseph Drury, Headmaster of Harrow, where Byron went in 1801. Byron was placed in Henry Drury's house, but in 1803 he refused to return to school unless he was transferred to another house, which was accordingly done. In after life Byron became very friendly with Henry Drury.

Message he sent me, to which I shall return no answer, but submit my case to *you* and those you may think *fit* to *consult*. Is this fit usage for any body? had I *stole* or behaved in the most *abominable* way to him, his language could not have been more outrageous. What must the boys think of me to hear such a Message ordered to be delivered me by a *Master*? Better let him take away my life than ruin my *Character*. My Conscience acquits me of ever *meriting* expulsion at this School; I have been *idle* and I certainly ought not to talk in church, but I have never done a mean action at this School to him or *any one*. If I had done anything so *heinous*, why should he allow me to stay at the School? Why should he himself be so *criminal* as to overlook faults which merit the *appellation* of a *blackguard*? If he had had it in his power to have me expelled, he would long ago have *done* it; as it is, he has done *worse*. If I am treated in this Manner, I will not stay at this *School*. I write you that I will not as yet appeal to Dr. Drury; his Son's influence is more than mine and *justice* would be *refused* me. Remember I told you, when I *left* you at *Bath*, that he would seize every means and opportunity of revenge, not for leaving him so much as the mortification he suffered, because I begged you to let me leave him. If I had been the Blackguard he talks of, why did he not of his own accord refuse to keep me as his *pupil*? You know Dr. Drury's first letter, in it were these Words: "My son and Lord Byron have had some Disagreements; but I hope that his future behaviour will render a change of Tutors unnecessary." Last Term I was here but a short time, and though he endeavoured, he could find nothing to abuse

me in. Among other things I forgot to tell you he said he had a great mind to expel the Boy for speaking to me, and that if he ever again spoke to me he would expel him. Let him explain his meaning ; he abused me, but he neither did nor can mention anything bad of me, further than what every boy else in the School has done. I fear him not ; but let him explain his meaning ; 'tis all I ask. I beg you will write to Dr. Drury to let him know what I have said. He has behaved to me, as also Mr. Evans, very kindly. If you do not take notice of this, I will leave the School myself ; but I am sure *you* will not see me *ill treated* ; better that I should suffer anything than this. I believe you will be tired by this time of reading my letter, but, if you love me, you will now show it. Pray write me immediately. I shall ever remain,

Your affectionate Son,

BYRON.

P.S.—Hargreaves Hanson desires his love to you and hopes you are very well. I am not in want of any Money so will not ask you for any, God bless, bless you.

Augusta Byron—Byron's half-sister—to whom the next letter is written, was eight years older than her brother. She was brought up by her grandmother, and when the latter died divided her time among various relatives, from whose houses her letters to Byron during the three or four years preceding her marriage were written. In 1807 she married her first cousin, Col. George Leigh. Her husband was a friend of the Prince Regent. She had seven children, and

lived at Newmarket until 1818, when her husband was granted apartments in St. James's Palace.

Augusta Byron seems scarcely to have known her brother until 1802, after the death of her grandmother, with whom Mrs. Byron was not on friendly terms. From about that time they met occasionally, and a correspondence began which was maintained to the end of Byron's life. Byron sent her a copy of *Childe Harold* with the inscription—"To Augusta, my dearest sister, and my best friend, who has ever loved me much better than I deserved, this volume is presented by her father's son and most affectionate brother." She was godmother of Byron's daughter, Augusta Ada. In 1816 and 1817 Byron wrote to her the two sets of "Stanzas to Augusta," the "Epistle to Augusta," and the journal of his journey through the Alps. In the third canto of *Childe Harold* he says, referring to her—

"But one thing want these banks of Rhine,
Thy gentle hand to clasp in mine."

He carried with him everywhere a Bible she had given him. His last letter was to her, and his last words about her.

Several of Mrs. Leigh's commonplace books are in existence, filled with extracts mostly on religious matters. Lord Stanhope described her as "extremely unprepossessing in her person and appearance—more like a nun than anything, and never can have had the least pretence to beauty. I thought her shy and sensitive to a fault in her mind and character." Frances, Lady Shelley, spoke of her as a "Dowdy-Goody."

5. *To the Hon. Augusta Byron*

BURGAGE MANOR, April 2d, 1804.

I received your present, my beloved Augusta, which was very acceptable, not that it will be of any use as a token of remembrance, No, my affection for you will never permit me to forget you.

I am afraid, my Dear Girl, that you will be absent when I am in town. I cannot exactly say when I return to Harrow, but however it will be in a very short time. I hope you were entertained by Sir Wm. Fawcett's¹ funeral on Saturday, Though I should imagine such spectacles rather calculated to excite Gloomy ideas. But I believe *your motive was not quite of so mournful a cast.*

You tell me that you are tired of London. I am rather surprised to hear that, for I thought the Gaieties of the Metropolis were particularly pleasing to *young ladies*. For my part I detest it; the smoke and the noise feel particularly unpleasant; but however it is preferable to this horrid place, where I am oppressed with *ennui*, and have no amusement of any kind, except the conversation of my mother, which is sometimes very *edifying*, but not always very *agreeable*. There are very few books of any kind that are either instructive or amusing, no society but old parsons and old Maids;—I shoot a Good deal; but, thank God, I have not so far lost my reason as to make shooting my only amusement. There are indeed some of my neighbours whose only pleasures consist in field sports, but in other respects they are only one degree removed from the brute creation.

¹ General Sir William Fawcett, Governor of Chelsea Hospital.

These however I endeavour not to imitate, but I sincerely wish for the company of a few friends about my own age to soften the austerity of the scene. I am an absolute Hermit ; in a short time my Gravity which is increased by my solitude will qualify me for an Archbishoprick ; I really begin to think that I should become a mitre amazingly well. You tell me to write to you when I have nothing better to do ; I am sure writing to you, my Dear Sister, must ever form my Greatest pleasure, but especially so, at this time. Your letters and those of one of my Harrow friends form my only resources for driving away *dull care*. For God-sake write me a letter as long as may fill *twenty sheets* of paper, recollect it is my only pleasure, if you won't Give me twenty sheets, at least send me as long an epistle as you can and as soon as possible ; there will be time for me to receive one more Letter at Southwell, and as soon as I Get to Harrow I will write to you. Excuse my not writing more, my Dear Augusta, for I am sure you will be sufficiently tired of reading this complaining narrative. God bless you, my beloved Sister. Adieu.

I remain your sincere and affectionate Friend
and Brother,

BYRON.

Remember me kindly to Mrs. Harcourt.¹

6. To the Hon. Augusta Byron

HARROW-ON-THE-HILL,

October 25th, 1804.

MY DEAR AUGUSTA,—In compliance with your wishes, as well as gratitude for your affectionate

¹ The wife of General the Hon. William Harcourt, at whose house at Windsor Augusta was staying.

letter, I proceed as soon as possible to answer it ; I am glad to hear that *any body* gives a good account of me ; but from the quarter you mention, I should imagine it was exaggerated. That you are unhappy, my dear Sister, makes me so also ; were it in my power to relieve your sorrows you would soon recover your spirits ; as it is, I sympathize better than you yourself expect. But really, after all (pardon me my dear Sister), I feel a little inclined to laugh at you, for love, in my humble opinion, is utter nonsense, a mere jargon of compliments, romance, and deceit ; now, for my part, had I fifty mistresses, I should in the course of a fortnight, forget them all, and, if by any chance I ever recollected one, should laugh at it as a dream, and bless my stars, for delivering me from the hands of the little mischievous Blind God. Can't you drive this Cousin¹ of ours out of your pretty little head (for as to *hearts* I think they are out of the question), or if you are so far gone, why don't you give old L'Harpagon² (I mean the General) the slip, and take a trip to Scotland, you are now pretty near the Borders. Be sure to Remember me to my formal Guardy Lord Carlisle,³ whose magisterial presence I have not been into for some years, nor have I any ambition to attain so great an honour. As to your favourite Lady

¹ Colonel Leigh.

² General Leigh, the father of Col. Leigh. Harpagon is a character in Molière's *L'Avare*.

³ Byron's guardian. Byron dedicated *Hours of Idleness* to him. Later on Byron was offended because Carlisle did not act as his introducer when he took his seat in the House of Lords. He attacked him in *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*, but subsequently in *Childe Harold* admitted he had done him "some wrong."

Gertrude,¹ I don't remember her ; pray, is she handsome ? I dare say she is, for although they are a *disagreeable, formal, stiff* Generation, yet they have by no means plain *persons*, I remember Lady Cawdor was a sweet, pretty woman ; pray, does your sentimental Gertrude resemble her ? I have heard that the duchess of Rutland was handsome also, but we will say nothing about her temper, as I hate Scandal.

Adieu, my pretty Sister, forgive my levity, write soon, and God bless you.

I remain, your very affectionate Brother, BYRON.

P.S.—I left my mother at Southwell, some time since, in a monstrous pet with you for not writing. I am sorry to say the old lady and myself don't agree like lambs in a meadow, but I believe it is all my own fault, I am rather too fidgety, which my precise mama objects to, we differ, then argue, and to my shame be it spoken fall out a *little*, however after a storm comes a calm ; what's become of our aunt the amiable antiquated Sophia ? ² is she yet in the land of the living, or does she sing psalms with the *Blessed* in the other world. Adieu. I am happy enough and Comfortable here. My friends are not numerous, but select ; among them I rank as the principal Lord Delawarr, who is very amiable and my particular friend ; do you know the family at all ? Lady Delawarr is frequently in town, perhaps you may have seen her ; if she resembles her son she is the most amiable woman in Europe. I have plenty

¹ Carlisle's three daughters were Gertrude (afterwards Lady Gertrude Stanley) ; Caroline Isabella, Lady Cawdor ; and Elizabeth, Duchess of Rutland.

² A daughter of Admiral Byron (1757-1821).

of acquaintances, but I reckon them as mere Blanks. Adieu, my dear Augusta.

7. *To the Hon. Augusta Byron*

TRIN. COL., Novr. 6th, 1805.

MY DEAR AUGUSTA,—As might be supposed I like a College Life extremely, especially as I have escaped the Trammels or rather *Fetters* of my domestic Tyrant Mrs. Byron, who continued to plague me during my visit in July and September. I am now most pleasantly situated in *Super-excellent* Rooms, flanked on one side by my Tutor, on the other by an old Fellow, both of whom are rather checks upon my *vivacity*. I am allowed 500 a year, a Servant and Horse, so Feel as independent as a German Prince who coins his own Cash, or a Cherokee Chief who coins no Cash at all, but enjoys what is more precious, Liberty. I talk in raptures of that *Goddess* because my amiable Mama was so despotic. I am afraid the Specimens I have lately given her of my Spirit, and determination to submit to no more unreasonable demands, (or the insults which follow a refusal to obey her implicitly whether right or wrong,) have given high offence, as I had a most *fiery* Letter from the *Court* at *Southwell* on Tuesday, because I would not turn off my Servant, (whom I had not the least reason to distrust, and who had an excellent Character from his last Master) at her suggestion, from some caprice she had taken into her head.¹ I sent back to the Epistle, which was couched in *elegant* terms, a severe answer, which so nettled her Ladyship, that after reading

¹ Byron's valet. Mrs. Byron informed her son that he had been accused of obtaining money on false pretences from a tradesman. He was afterwards transported.

it, she returned it in a Cover without deigning a Syllable in return.

The Letter and my answer you shall behold when you next see me, that you may judge of the Comparative merits of Each. I shall let her go on in the *Heroics*, till she cools, without taking the least notice. Her Behaviour to me for the last two Years neither merits my respect, nor deserves my affection. I am comfortable here, and having one of the best allowances in College, go on Gaily, but not extravagantly. I need scarcely inform you that I am not the least obliged to Mrs. B. for it, as it comes off my property, and She refused to fit out a single thing for me from her own pocket; my Furniture is paid for, & she has moreover a handsome addition made to her own income, which I do not in the least regret, as I would wish her to be happy, but by *no means* to live with me in *person*. The sweets of her society I have already drunk to the last dregs, I hope we shall meet on more affectionate Terms, or meet no more.

But why do I say *meet*? her temper precludes every idea of happiness, and therefore in future I shall avoid her *hospitable* mansion, though she has the folly to suppose She is to be mistress of my house when I come of age. I must apologize to you for the dullness of this letter, but to tell you the truth the effects of last nights Claret have not gone out of my Head, as I supped with a large party. I suppose that Fool Hanson in his *vulgar* Idiom, by the word Jolly did not mean Fat, but High Spirits, for so far from increasing I have lost one pound in a fortnight as I find by being regularly weighed.

Adieu, Dearest Augusta.

8. *To Hargreaves Hanson*

TRINITY COL., Novr. 12th, 1805.

DEAR HARGREAVES,—Return my Thanks to your father for the *Expedition* he has used in filling my *Cellar*.

He deserves commendation for the *Attention* he paid to my Request. The Time of "Oat-eater's" Journey approaches; I presume he means to repair his Neglect by Punctuality in this Respect. However, no *Trinity Ale* will be forthcoming, till I have broached the promised *Falernum*. College improves in every thing but Learning. Nobody here seems to look into an Author, ancient or modern, if they can avoid it. The Muses, poor Devils, are totally neglected, except by a few Musty old *Sophs* and *Fellows*, who, however agreeable they may be to *Minerva*, are perfect Antidotes to the *Graces*. Even I (great as is my *inclination* for Knowledge) am carried away by the Tide, having only supped at Home twice since I saw your father, and have more engagements on my Hands for a week to come. Still my Tutor and I go on extremely well and for the first three weeks of my life I have not involved myself in any Scrape of Consequence.—I have News for you which I bear with *Christian* Resignation and without any *violent Transports* of *Grief*. My Mother (whose diabolical Temper you well know) has taken it into her *Sagacious* Head to quarrel with me her *dutiful Son*. She has such a Devil of a Disposition, that she cannot be quiet, though there are fourscore miles between us, which I wish were lengthened to 400. The Cause too frivolous to require taking up your time to read or mine to write. At last in answer to a

Furious Epistle I returned a *Sarcastick* Answer, which so incensed the *Amiable Dowager* that my Letter was sent back without her deigning a Line in the cover. When I next see you, you shall behold her Letter and my Answer, which will amuse you as they both contain fiery Philippics. I must request you will write immediately, that I may be informed when my Servant shall convey "Oateater" from London; the 20th was the appointed; but I wish to hear further from your father. I hope all the family are in a convalescent State. I shall see you at Christmas (if I live) as I propose passing the Vacation, which is only a Month, in London.

Believe me, Mr. Terry, your's Truly, BYRON.

9. To William Bankes¹

SOUTHWELL, March 6, 1807.

DEAR BANKES,—Your critique is valuable for many reasons: in the first place, it is the only one in which flattery has borne so slight a part; in the *next*, I am *cloyed* with insipid compliments. I have a better opinion of your judgment and ability than your *feelings*. Accept my most sincere thanks for your kind decision, not less welcome, because totally unexpected. With regard to a more exact estimate, I need not remind you how few of the *best poems*, in our language, will stand the test of *minute* or *verbal* criticism: it can, therefore, hardly be expected the effusions of a boy (and most of these pieces have been produced at an early period) can derive much merit

¹ William John Bankes was at Cambridge with Byron. He travelled in the East; translated an Italian book of travel; and sat in Parliament.

either from the subject or composition. Many of them were written under great depression of spirits, and during severe indisposition :—hence the gloomy turn of the ideas. We coincide in opinion that the “ *poësies érotiques* ” are the most exceptionable ; they were, however, grateful to the *deities*, on whose altars they were offered—more I seek not.

The portrait of Pomposus¹ was drawn at Harrow, after a *long sitting* ; this accounts for the resemblance, or rather the *caricatura*. He is *your* friend, he *never was mine*—for both our sakes I shall be silent on this head. The *collegiate* rhymes are not personal—one of the notes may appear so, but could not be omitted. I have little doubt they will be deservedly abused—a just punishment for my unfilial treatment of so excellent an Alma Mater. I sent you no copy, lest *we* should be placed in the situation of *Gil Blas* and the *Archbishop* of Grenada ;² though running some hazard from the experiment, I wished your *verdict* to be unbiassed. Had my “ *Libellus* ” been presented previous to your letter, it would have appeared a species of bribe to purchase compliment. I feel no hesitation in saying, I was more anxious to hear your critique, however severe, than the praises of the *million*. On the same day I was honoured with the encomiums of *Mackenzie*,³ the celebrated author of the *Man of Feeling*. Whether *his* approbation or *yours* elated me most, I cannot decide.

¹ Dr. Butler, who had succeeded Dr. Drury as Headmaster of Harrow.

² When *Gil Blas* criticizes the *Archbishop's* work he is dismissed for his candour.

³ Henry Mackenzie (1745–1831), novelist, playwright, essayist, and political writer.

You will receive my *Juvenilia*,—at least all yet published. I have a large volume in manuscript, which may in part appear hereafter; at present I have neither time nor inclination to prepare it for the press. In the spring I shall return to Trinity, to dismantle my rooms, and bid you a final adieu. The *Cam* will not be much increased by my *tears* on the occasion. Your further remarks, however *caustic* or bitter, to a palate vitiated with the *sweets of adulation*, will be of service. Johnson has shown us that *no poetry* is perfect; but to correct mine would be an Herculean labour. In fact I never looked beyond the moment of composition, and published merely at the request of my friends. Notwithstanding so much has been said concerning the “Genus *“irritabile vatum,”*¹ we shall never quarrel on the subject—poetic fame is by no means the “acme” of my wishes.—Adieu.

Yours ever,

BYRON.

10. To Robert Charles Dallas

DORANT'S [HOTEL, ALBEMARLE STREET],

January 21, 1808.

SIR,—Whenever leisure and inclination permit me the pleasure of a visit, I shall feel truly gratified in a personal acquaintance with one whose mind has been long known to me in his writings.

You are so far correct in your conjecture, that I am a member of the University of Cambridge, where I shall take my degree of A.M. this term; but were reasoning, eloquence, or virtue, the objects of my search, Granta is not their metropolis, nor is the place of her situation an “El

¹ Horace, *Epist.* II, ii, 102.

“Dorado,” far less an Utopia. The intellects of her children are as stagnant as her Cam, and their pursuits limited to the church—not of Christ, but of the nearest benefice.

As to my reading, I believe I may aver, without hyperbole, it has been tolerably extensive in the historical department ; so that few nations exist, or have existed, with whose records I am not in some degree acquainted, from Herodotus down to Gibbon. Of the classics, I know about as much as most school-boys after a discipline of thirteen years ; of the law of the land as much as enables me to keep “within the statute”—to use the poacher’s vocabulary. I did study the “Spirit of Laws”¹ and the Law of Nations ; but when I saw the latter violated every month, I gave up my attempts at so useless an accomplishment :—of geography, I have seen more land on maps than I should wish to traverse on foot ;—of mathematics, enough to give me the headache without clearing the part affected ;—of philosophy, astronomy, and metaphysics, more than I can comprehend ; and of common sense so little, that I mean to leave a Byronian prize at each of our “Almæ Matres” for the first discovery,—though I rather fear that of the longitude will precede it.

I once thought myself a philosopher, and talked nonsense with great decorum : I defied pain, and preached up equanimity. For some time this did very well, for no one was in *pain* for me but my friends, and none lost their patience but my hearers. At last, a fall from my horse convinced me bodily suffering was an evil ; and the worst of an argument upset my maxims and my temper at the

¹ Montesquieu’s *Esprit des Lois*.

same moment : so I quitted Zeno for Aristippus, and conceive that pleasure constitutes the *το καλον*.

In morality, I prefer Confucius to the Ten Commandments, and Socrates to St. Paul (though the two latter agree in their opinion of marriage). In religion, I favour the Catholic emancipation, but do not acknowledge the Pope ; and I have refused to take the sacrament, because I do not think eating bread or drinking wine from the hand of an earthly vicar will make me an inheritor of heaven. I hold virtue, in general, or the virtues severally, to be only in the disposition, each a *feeling*, not a principle. I believe truth the prime attribute of the Deity, and death an eternal sleep, at least of the body. You have here a brief compendium of the sentiments of the *wicked* George, Lord Byron ; and, till I get a new suit, you will perceive I am badly clothed.

I remain yours, etc.,

BYRON.

II

THE GRAND TOUR

(1808-1811)

ON leaving Cambridge in 1808, Byron settled at Newstead; raised money to make repairs and maintain his establishment there; celebrated his coming of age; and took his seat in the House of Lords. In July 1809 he sailed from Falmouth in the Lisbon packet for his "grand tour," accompanied by Hobhouse and three servants. From Lisbon he rode five hundred miles across Spain to Seville and Cadiz; and thence sailed to Gibraltar, and with Galt (who afterwards wrote his life) on to Malta. Here he fell in with a Mrs. Spencer Smith with a romantic history, to whom he addressed the verses "To Florence" and a passage in *Childe Harold*. From Malta he proceeded to Turkey; visited Ali Pacha at Tepelen; was nearly lost in a Turkish man-of-war on his return; and made his way to Greece, reaching Athens on Christmas Eve 1809. He lodged with Mrs. Black, widow of the English vice-consul, and mother of the Theresa celebrated by him as the "Maid of Athens." In March 1810 he departed for Smyrna, where he completed the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*; visited Ephesus; and sailed to Constantinople. From there he swam the Hellespont, and visited the Troad. In July Hobhouse returned to England, but Byron went

back to Athens, where he remained during the winter. In the following June he sailed for England, and reached Portsmouth at the beginning of July 1811.

His travelling companion, John Cam Hobhouse (who afterwards held posts in various ministries, and became Baron Broughton de Gyfford), had made Byron's acquaintance at Cambridge. He included some pieces by Byron in his *Imitations and Translations* (1809). He was Byron's best man at his marriage, and was the last person to shake hands with him on Dover pier when he left England in 1816. He visited Byron in Switzerland and Italy, and prepared the commentary on the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*, which Byron dedicated to him. He was throughout a staunch, shrewd and candid friend of Byron. On September 22nd, 1822, when at Pisa he saw Byron for the last time, Byron's parting words were "Hobhouse, you should never have come, or you should never go."

II. To the Hon. Augusta Leigh

NEWSTEAD ABBEY, NOTTS.,

Decr. 14th, 1808.

MY DEAREST AUGUSTA,—When I stated in my last, that my intercourse with the world had hardened my heart, I did not mean from any matrimonial disappointment, no, I have been guilty of many absurdities, but I hope in God I shall always escape that worst of evils, Marriage. I have no doubt there are exceptions, and of course include you amongst them, but you will recollect, that "*exceptions only prove the Rule.*"

I live here much in my own manner, that is, *alone*, for I could not bear the company of my best friend, above a month ; there is such a sameness in mankind upon the whole, and they grow so much more disgusting every day, that, were it not for a portion of Ambition, and a conviction that in times like the present we ought to perform our respective duties, I should live here all my life, in unvaried Solitude. I have been visited by all our Nobility and Gentry ; but I return no visits. Joseph Murray¹ is at the head of my household, poor honest fellow ! I should be a great Brute, if I had not provided for him in the manner most congenial to his own feelings, and to mine. I have several horses, and a considerable establishment, but I am not addicted to hunting or shooting. I hate all field sports, though a few years since I was a tolerable adept in the *polite* arts of Foxhunting, Hawking, Boxing, etc., etc. My Library is rather extensive, (and as you perhaps know) I am a mighty Scribbler ; I flatter myself I have made some improvements in Newstead, and, as I am independent, I am happy, as far as any person unfortunate enough to be born into this world, can be said to be so.

I shall be glad to hear from you when convenient, and beg you to believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

BYRON.

12. To John Hanson

BATT'S HOTEL, JERMYN STREET,
April 26th, 1809.

DEAR SIR,—I wish to know before I make my final effort elsewhere, if you can or cannot assist

¹ See p. 27, note.

me in raising a sum of money on fair and equitable terms and immediately. I called twice this morning, and beg you will favour me with an answer when convenient. I hope all your family are well. I should like to see them together before my departure.

The Court of Chancery it seems will not pay the money, of which indeed I do not know the precise amount ; the Duke of Portland will not pay his debt, and with the Rochdale property nothing is done.—My debts are daily increasing, and it is with difficulty I can command a shilling. As soon as possible I shall get quit of this country, but I wish to do justice to my creditors (though I do not like their importunity), and particularly to my securities, for their annuities must be paid off soon, or the interest will swallow up everything. Come what may, in every shape and in any shape, I can meet ruin, but I will never sell Newstead ; the Abbey and I shall stand or fall together, and were my head as grey and defenceless as the Arch of the Priory, I would abide by this resolution. The whole of my wishes are summed up in this ; procure me, either of my own or borrowed of others, three thousand pounds, and place two in Hammersley's hands for letters of credit at Constantinople ; if possible sell Rochdale in my absence, pay off these annuities and my debts, and with the little that remains do as you will, but allow me to depart from this cursed country, and I promise to turn Mussulman, rather than return to it. Believe me to be,

Yours truly,

BYRON.

P.S.—Is my will finished ? I should like to sign it while I have anything to leave.

13. *To his Mother*

FALMOUTH, June 22, 1809.

DEAR MOTHER,—I am about to sail in a few days ; probably before this reaches you. Fletcher begged so hard, that I have continued him in my service. If he does not behave well abroad, I will send him back in a *transport*. I have a German servant (who has been with Mr. Wilbraham in Persia before, and was strongly recommended to me by Dr. Butler, of Harrow), Robert¹ and William ; they constitute my whole suite. I have letters in plenty :—you shall hear from me at the different ports I touch upon ; but you must not be alarmed if my letters miscarry. The Continent is in a fine state—an insurrection has broken out at Paris, and the Austrians are beating Buonaparte—the Tyrolese have risen.

There is a picture of me in oil,² to be sent down to Newstead soon.—I wish the Miss Pigots³ had something better to do than carry my miniatures to Nottingham to copy. Now they have done it, you may ask them to copy the others, which are greater favourites than my own. As to money matters, I am ruined—at least till Rochdale is sold ; and if that does not turn out well, I shall enter into the Austrian or Russian service—perhaps the Turkish, if I like their manners. The world is all before me, and I leave England without regret, and without a wish to revisit anything

¹ Robert Rushton and William Fletcher, the “ little page ” and “ staunch yeoman ” of Childe Harold’s “ Good Night,” Canto I, stanza xiii.

² By George Sanders (1774–1846).

³ Mrs. Pigot, with her children, lived at Southwell, where for a time Mrs. Byron had a house.

it contains, except *yourself*, and your present residence.

Believe me, yours ever sincerely.

P.S.—Pray tell Mr. Rushton his son is well, and doing well ; so is Murray,¹ indeed better than I ever saw him ; he will be back in about a month. I ought to add the leaving Murray to my few regrets, as his age perhaps will prevent my seeing him again. Robert I take with me ; I like him, because, like myself, he seems a friendless animal.

14. *To his Mother*

PREVEZA, November 12, 1809.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have now been some time in Turkey : this place is on the coast, but I have traversed the interior of the province of Albania on a visit to the Pacha. I left Malta in the *Spider*, a brig of war, on the 21st of September, and arrived in eight days at Prevesa. I thence have been about 150 miles, as far as Tepaleen, his Highness's country palace, where I stayed three days. The name of the Pacha is *Ali*, and he is considered a man of the first abilities ; he governs the whole of Albania (the ancient Illyricum), Epirus, and part of Macedonia. His son, Vely Pacha, to whom he has given me letters, governs the Morea, and has great influence in Egypt ; in short, he is one of the most powerful men in the Ottoman empire. When I reached Yanina, the capital, after a journey of three days over the mountains,

¹ Joseph Murray had been in the employment of the fifth Lord Byron. At his master's death he was for some years employed by the Duke of Leeds. When he left that service Byron made him an allowance, and in his draft will of 1811 left him £50 a year for life. . . . He was sent back from Gibraltar, together with the homesick Rushton.

through a country of the most picturesque beauty, I found that Ali Pacha was with his army in Illyricum, besieging Ibrahim Pacha in the castle of Berat. He had heard that an Englishman of rank was in his dominions, and had left orders in Yanina with the commandant to provide a house, and supply me with every kind of necessary *gratis*; and, though I have been allowed to make presents to the slaves, etc., I have not been permitted to pay for a single article of household consumption.

I rode out on the vizier's horses, and saw the palaces of himself and grandsons: they are splendid, but too much ornamented with silk and gold. I then went over the mountains through Zitza, a village with a Greek monastery (where I slept on my return), in the most beautiful situation (always excepting Cintra, in Portugal) I ever beheld. In nine days I reached Tepaleen. Our journey was much prolonged by the torrents that had fallen from the mountains, and intersected the roads. I shall never forget the singular scene on entering Tepaleen at five in the afternoon, as the sun was going down. It brought to my mind (with some change of *dress*, however) Scott's description of Branksome Castle in his *Lay*¹, and the feudal system. The Albanians, in their dresses, (the most magnificent in the world, consisting of a long *white kilt*, gold-worked cloak, crimson velvet gold-laced jacket and waistcoat, silver mounted pistols and daggers,) the Tartars with their high caps, the Turks in their vast pelisses and turbans, the soldiers and black slaves with the horses, the former in groups in an immense large open gallery in front of the palace, the latter

¹ *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Canto I.

placed in a kind of cloister below it, two hundred steeds ready caparisoned to move in a moment, couriers entering or passing out with the despatches, the kettle-drums beating, boys calling the hour from the minaret of the mosque, altogether, with the singular appearance of the building itself, formed a new and delightful spectacle to a stranger. I was conducted to a very handsome apartment, and my health inquired after by the vizier's secretary, *à-la-mode Turque*!

The next day I was introduced to Ali Pacha. I was dressed in a full suit of staff uniform, with a very magnificent sabre, etc. The vizier received me in a large room paved with marble; a fountain was playing in the centre; the apartment was surrounded by scarlet ottomans. He received me standing, a wonderful compliment from a Mussulman, and made me sit down on his right hand. I have a Greek interpreter for general use, but a physician of Ali's named Femlario, who understands Latin, acted for me on this occasion. His first question was, why, at so early an age, I left my country?—(the Turks have no idea of travelling for amusement). He then said, the English minister, Captain Leake,¹ had told him I was of a great family, and desired his respects to my mother; which I now, in the name of Ali Pacha, present to you. He said he was certain I was a man of birth, because I had small ears, curling hair, and little white hands, and expressed himself pleased with my appearance and garb. He told me to consider him as a father whilst I was in Turkey, and said he looked on me as his

¹ William Martin Leake, diplomatist, antiquarian, and author of many topographical books.

son. Indeed, he treated me like a child, sending me almonds and sugared sherbet, fruit and sweetmeats, twenty times a day. He begged me to visit him often, and at night, when he was at leisure. I then, after coffee and pipes, retired for the first time. I saw him thrice afterwards. It is singular that the Turks, who have no hereditary dignities, and few great families, except the Sultans, pay so much respect to birth; for I found my pedigree more regarded than my title.

To-day I saw the remains of the town of Actium, near which Antony lost the world, in a small bay, where two frigates could hardly manœuvre: a broken wall is the sole remnant. On another part of the gulf stand the ruins of Nicopolis, built by Augustus in honour of his victory. Last night I was at a Greek marriage; but this and a thousand things more I have neither time nor *space* to describe.

His highness is sixty years old, very fat, and not tall, but with a fine face, light blue eyes, and a white beard; his manner is very kind, and at the same time he possesses that dignity which I find universal amongst the Turks. He has the appearance of anything but his real character, for he is a remorseless tyrant, guilty of the most horrible cruelties, very brave, and so good a general that they call him the Mahometan Buonaparte. Napoleon has twice offered to make him King of Epirus, but he prefers the English interest, and abhors the French, as he himself told me. He is of so much consequence, that he is much courted by both, the Albanians being the most warlike subjects of the Sultan, though Ali is only nominally dependent on the Porte; he has been a mighty warrior, but is as barbarous as he is suc-

cessful, roasting rebels, etc., etc. Buonaparte sent him a snuff-box with his picture. He said the snuff-box was very well, but the picture he could excuse, as he neither liked it nor the original. His ideas of judging of a man's birth from ears, hands, etc., were curious enough. To me he was, indeed, a father, giving me letters, guards, and every possible accommodation. Our next conversations were of war and travelling, politics and England. He called my Albanian soldier, who attends me, and told him to protect me at all hazard ; his name is Viscillie, and, like all the Albanians, he is brave, rigidly honest, and faithful ; but they are cruel, though not treacherous, and have several vices but no meannesses. They are, perhaps, the most beautiful race, in point of countenance, in the world ; their women are sometimes handsome also, but they are treated like slaves, *beaten*, and, in short, complete beasts of burden ; they plough, dig, and sow. I found them carrying wood, and actually repairing the highways. The men are all soldiers, and war and the chase their sole occupations. The women are the labourers, which after all is no great hardship in so delightful a climate. Yesterday, the 11th of November, I bathed in the sea ; to-day is so hot that I am writing in a shady room of the English consul's, with three doors wide open, no fire, or even *fireplace*, in the house, except for culinary purposes.

I am going to-morrow, with a guard of fifty men, to Patras in the Morea, and thence to Athens, where I shall winter. Two days ago I was nearly lost in a Turkish ship of war, owing to the ignorance of the captain and crew, though the storm was not violent. Fletcher yelled after his wife, the

Greeks called on all the saints, the Mussulmans on Alla ; the captain burst into tears and ran below deck, telling us to call on God ; the sails were split, the main-yard shivered, the wind blowing fresh, the night setting in, and all our chance was to make Corfu, which is in possession of the French, or (as Fletcher pathetically termed it) "a watery grave." I did what I could to console Fletcher, but finding him incorrigible, wrapped myself up in my Albanian capôte (an immense cloak), and lay down on deck to wait the worst. I have learnt to philosophise in my travels ; and if I had not, complaint was useless. Luckily the wind abated, and only drove us on the coast of Suli, on the main land, where we landed, and proceeded, by the help of the natives, to Prevesa again ; but I shall not trust Turkish sailors in future, though the Pacha had ordered one of his own galliots to take me to Patras. I am therefore going as far as Missolonghi by land, and there have only to cross a small gulf to get to Patras.

Fletcher's next epistle will be full of marvels. We were one night lost for nine hours in the mountains in a thunder-storm, and since nearly wrecked. In both cases Fletcher was sorely bewildered, from apprehensions of famine and banditti in the first, and drowning in the second instance. His eyes were a little hurt by the lightning, or crying (I don't know which), but are now recovered. When you write, address to me at Mr. Strané's, English consul, Patras, Morea.

I could tell you I know not how many incidents that I think would amuse you, but they crowd on my mind as much as they would swell my paper, and I can neither arrange them in the one, nor

put them down on the other, except in the greatest confusion. I like the Albanians much ; they are not all Turks ; some tribes are Christians. But their religion makes little difference in their manner or conduct. They are esteemed the best troops in the Turkish service. I lived on my route, two days at once, and three days again, in a barrack at Salona, and never found soldiers so tolerable, though I have been in the garrisons of Gibraltar and Malta, and seen Spanish, French, Sicilian, and British troops in abundance. I have had nothing stolen, and was always welcome to their provision and milk. Not a week ago an Albanian chief (every village has its chief, who is called Primate,) after helping us out of the Turkish galley in her distress, feeding us, and lodging my suite, consisting of Fletcher, a Greek, two Athenians, a Greek priest, and my companion, Mr. Hobhouse, refused any compensation but a written paper stating that I was well received ; and when I pressed him to accept a few sequins, " No," he replied ; " I wish you to love me, not to pay me." These are his words.

It is astonishing how far money goes in this country. While I was in the capital I had nothing to pay by the vizier's order ; but since, though I have generally had sixteen horses, and generally six or seven men, the expense has not been *half* as much as staying only three weeks in Malta, though Sir A. Ball, the governor, gave me a house for nothing, and I had only *one servant*. By the by, I expect Hanson to remit regularly ; for I am not about to stay in this province for ever. Let him write to me at Mr. Strané's, English consul, Patras.

The fact is, the fertility of the plains is wonderful, and specie is scarce, which makes this remarkable

cheapness. I am going to Athens, to study modern Greek, which differs much from the ancient, though radically similar. I have no desire to return to England, nor shall I, unless compelled by absolute want, and Hanson's neglect; but I shall not enter into Asia for a year or two, as I have much to see in Greece, and I may perhaps cross into Africa, at least the Egyptian part. Fletcher, like all Englishmen, is very much dissatisfied, though a little reconciled to the Turks by a present of eighty piastres from the vizier, which, if you consider every thing, and the value of specie here, is nearly worth ten guineas English. He has suffered nothing but from cold, heat, and vermin, which those who lie in cottages and cross mountains in a cold country must undergo, and of which I have equally partaken with himself; but he is not valiant, and is afraid of robbers and tempests. I have no one to be remembered to in England, and wish to hear nothing from it, but that you are well, and a letter or two on business from Hanson, whom you may tell to write. I will write when I can, and beg you to believe me,

Your affectionate son,

BYRON.

P.S.—I have some very “magnifiques” Albanian dresses, the only expensive articles in this country. They cost fifty guineas each, and have so much gold, they would cost in England two hundred.

I have been introduced to Hussein Bey, and Mahmout Pacha, both little boys, grandchildren of Ali, at Yanina; they are totally unlike our lads, have painted complexions like rouged dowagers, large black eyes, and features perfectly regular. They are the prettiest little animals I ever saw,

and are broken into the court ceremonies already. The Turkish salute is a slight inclination of the head, with the hand on the heart; intimates always kiss. Mahmout is ten years old, and hopes to see me again; we are friends without understanding each other, like many other folks, though from a different cause. He has given me a letter to his father in the Morea, to whom I have also letters from Ali Pacha.

15. *To Henry Drury*¹

Salsette FRIGATE, May 3, 1810.

MY DEAR DRURY,—When I left England, nearly a year ago, you requested me to write to you—I will do so. I have crossed Portugal, traversed the south of Spain, visited Sardinia, Sicily, Malta, and thence passed into Turkey, where I am still wandering. I first landed in Albania, the ancient Epirus, where we penetrated as far as Mount Tomarit—excellently treated by the chief Ali Pacha,—and, after journeying through Illyria, Chaonia, etc., crossed the Gulf of Actium, with a guard of fifty Albanians, and passed the Achelous in our route through Acarnania and Ætolia. We stopped a short time in the Morea, crossed the Gulf of Lepanto, and landed at the foot of Parnassus;—saw all that Delphi retains, and so on to Thebes and Athens, at which last we remained ten weeks.

His Majesty's ship, *Pylades*, brought us to Smyrna; but not before we had topographised Attica, including, of course, Marathon and the Sunian promontory. From Smyrna to the Troad (which we visited when at anchor, for a fortnight,

¹ See p. 6, note.

off the tomb of Antilochus) was our next stage ; and now we are in the Dardanelles, waiting for a wind to proceed to Constantinople.

This morning I *swam* from *Sestos* to *Abydos*. The immediate distance is not above a mile, but the current renders it hazardous ;—so much so that I doubt whether Leander's conjugal affection must not have been a little chilled in his passage to Paradise. I attempted it a week ago, and failed,—owing to the north wind, and the wonderful rapidity of the tide,—though I have been from my childhood a strong swimmer. But, this morning being calmer, I succeeded, and crossed the “ broad Hellespont ” in an hour and ten minutes.

Well, my dear sir, I have left my home, and seen part of Africa and Asia, and a tolerable portion of Europe. I have been with generals and admirals, princes and pashas, governors and ungovernables,—but I have not time or paper to expatiate. I wish to let you know that I live with a friendly remembrance of you, and a hope to meet you again ; and if I do this as shortly as possible, attribute it to any thing but forgetfulness.

Greece, ancient and modern, you know too well to require description. Albania, indeed, I have seen more of than any Englishman (except a Mr. Leake), for it is a country rarely visited, from the savage character of the natives, though abounding in more natural beauties than the classical regions of Greece,—which, however, are still eminently beautiful, particularly Delphi and Cape Colonna in Attica. Yet these are nothing to parts of Illyria and Epirus, where places without a name, and rivers not laid down in maps, may, one day, when more known, be justly esteemed superior

subjects, for the pencil and the pen, to the dry ditch of the Ilissus and the bogs of Bœotia.

The Troad is a fine field for conjecture and snipe-shooting, and a good sportsman and an ingenious scholar may exercise their feet and faculties to great advantage upon the spot ;—or, if they prefer riding, lose their way (as I did) in a cursed quagmire of the Scamander, who wriggles about as if the Dardan virgins still offered their wonted tribute. The only vestige of Troy, or her destroyers, are the barrows supposed to contain the carcasses of Achilles, Antilochus, Ajax, etc. ;—but Mount Ida is still in high feather, though the shepherds are now-a-days not much like Ganymede. But why should I say more of these things ? are they not written in the *Boke of Gell* ?¹ and has not Hobhouse got a journal ? I keep none, as I have renounced scribbling.

I see not much difference between ourselves and the Turks, save that we have * * and they have none—that they have long dresses, and we short, and that we talk much, and they little. They are sensible people. Ali Pacha told me he was sure I was a man of rank, because I had *small ears* and *hands*, and *curling hair*. By the by, I speak the Romaic, or modern Greek, tolerably. It does not differ from the ancient dialects so much as you would conceive ; but the pronunciation is diametrically opposite. Of verse, except in rhyme, they have no idea.

I like the Greeks, who are plausible rascals,—with all the Turkish vices, without their courage. However, some are brave, and all are beautiful,

¹ Sir William Gell (1777–1836), writer of a number of topographical books on Greece.

very much resembling the busts of Alcibiades ;—the women not quite so handsome. I can swear in Turkish ; but, except one horrible oath, and “ pimp,” and “ bread,” and “ water,” I have got no great vocabulary in that language. They are extremely polite to strangers of any rank, properly protected ; and as I have two servants and two soldiers, we get on with great *éclat*. We have been occasionally in danger of thieves, and once of shipwreck,—but always escaped.

Of Spain I sent some account to our Hodgson,¹ but have subsequently written to no one, save notes to relations and lawyers, to keep them out of my premises. I mean to give up all connection, on my return, with many of my best friends—as I supposed them—and to snarl all my life. But I hope to have one good-humoured laugh with you, and to embrace Dwyer; and pledge Hodgson, before I commence cynicism.

Tell Dr. Butler I am now writing with the gold pen he gave me before I left England, which is the reason my scrawl is more unintelligible than usual. I have been at Athens, and seen plenty of these reeds for scribbling, some of which he refused to bestow upon me, because topographic Gell had brought them from Attica. But I will not describe,—no—you must be satisfied with simple detail till my return, and then we will unfold the

¹ Francis Hodgson, tutor at King's College, Cambridge, and afterwards Archdeacon of Derby and Provost of Eton. He published numerous volumes of poetry, and wrote to the reviews. He became acquainted with Byron in 1807, when, at the same time that Byron was meditating *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*, Hodgson, stung by an attack in the *Edinburgh Review* on his translation of Juvenal, was composing his *Gentle Alternative Prepared for the Reviewers*. . . . Byron gave him £1,000 to enable him to marry a sister of Mrs. Henry Drury.

flood-gates of colloquy. I am in a thirty-six gun frigate, going up to fetch Bob Adair¹ from Constantinople, who will have the honour to carry this letter.

And so Hobhouse's *boke*² is out, with some sentimental sing-song of my own to fill up,—and how does it take, eh? and where the devil is the second edition of my Satire,³ with additions? and my name on the title page? and more lines tagged to the end, with a new exordium and what not, hot from my anvil before I cleared the Channel? The Mediterranean and the Atlantic roll between me and criticism; and the thunders of the Hyperborean Review are deafened by the roar of the Hellespont.

Remember me to Claridge,⁴ if not translated to college, and present to Hodgson assurances of my high consideration. Now, you will ask, what shall I do next? and I answer, I do not know. I may return in a few months, but I have intents and projects after visiting Constantinople.—Hobhouse, however, will probably be back in September.

On the 2d of July we have left Albion one year—*oblitus meorum obliviscendus et illis*.⁵ I was sick of my own country, and not much prepossessed in favour of any other; but I "drag on my chain" without "lengthening it at each remove."⁶ I am like the Jolly Miller,⁷ caring for nobody, and not cared for. All countries are much the same

¹ Sir Robert Adair, Ambassador to Turkey.

² *Imitations and Translations*.

³ The second edition of *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*, with Byron's name attached, appeared in October, 1809.

⁴ John Claridge, who was at Harrow with Byron.

⁵ Horace, *Epist.* I. xi. 9.

⁶ Goldsmith, *The Traveller*, ll. 9-10.

⁷ In Isaac Bickerstaffe's *Love in a Village* (1762).

in my eyes. I smoke, and stare at mountains, and twirl my mustachios very independently. I miss no comforts, and the musquitoes that rack the morbid frame of H. have, luckily for me, little effect on mine, because I live more temperately.

I omitted Ephesus in my catalogue, which I visited during my sojourn at Smyrna; but the Temple has almost perished, and St. Paul need not trouble himself to epistolise the present brood of Ephesians, who have converted a large church built entirely of marble into a mosque, and I don't know that the edifice looks the worse for it.

My paper is full, and my ink ebbing—good afternoon! If you address to me at Malta, the letter will be forwarded wherever I may be. H. greets you; he pines for his poetry,—at least, some tidings of it. I almost forgot to tell you that I am dying for love of three Greek girls at Athens, sisters. I lived in the same house. Teresa,¹ Mariana, and Katinka are the names of these divinities,—all of them under fifteen.

Your Ταπεινοτατος δουλος,

BYRON.

16. *To Francis Hodgson*

CONSTANTINOPLE, *July 4, 1810.*

MY DEAR HODGSON,—Twice have I written—once in answer to your last, and a former letter when I arrived here in May. That I may have nothing to reproach myself with, I will write once more—a very superfluous task, seeing that Hobhouse is bound for your parts full of talk and wonderment. My first letter went by an ambassa-

¹ Theresa Macri, the "Maid of Athens." She married an Englishman named Black, survived him, and fell into great poverty. She died in 1875.

dorial express ; my second by the *Black John* lugger ; my third will be conveyed by Cam,¹ the miscellanist.

I shall begin by telling you, having only told it you twice before, that I swam from Sestos to Abydos. I do this that you may be impressed with proper respect for me, the performer ; for I plume myself on this achievement more than I could possibly do on any kind of glory, political, poetical, or rhetorical. Having told you this, I will tell you nothing more, because it would be cruel to curtail Cam's narrative, which, by-the-by, you must not believe till confirmed by me, the eye-witness. I promise myself much pleasure from contradicting the greatest part of it. He has been plaguily pleased by the intelligence contained in your last to me respecting the reviews of his hymns. I refreshed him with that paragraph immediately, together with the tidings of my own third edition, which added to his recreation. But then he has had a letter from a Lincoln's Inn Benchler, full of praise of his harpings, and vituperation of the other contributions to his *Missellingany*, which that sagacious person is pleased to say must have been put in as FOILS (*horresco referens* !) ; furthermore he adds that Cam " is a genuine pupil of " Dryden," concluding with a comparison rather to the disadvantage of Pope.

I have written to Drury by Hobhouse ; a letter is also from me on its way to England intended for that matrimonial man. Before it is very long, I hope we shall again be together ; the moment I set out for England you shall have intelligence, that we may meet as soon as possible. Next week

¹ Hobhouse.

the frigate sails with Adair ; I am for Greece, Hobhouse for England. A year together on the 2nd July since we sailed from Falmouth. I have known a hundred instances of men setting out in couples, but not one of a similar return. Aberdeen's¹ party split ; several voyagers at present have done the same. I am confident that twelve months of any given individual is perfect ipecacuanha.

The Russians and Turks are at it, and the Sultan in person is soon to head the army. The Captain Pasha cuts off heads every day, and a Frenchman's ears ; the last is a serious affair. By-the-by I like the Pashas in general. Ali Pasha called me his son, desired his compliments to my mother, and said he was sure I was a man of birth, because I had "small ears and curling hair." He is Pasha of Albania six hundred miles off, where I was in October—a fine portly person. His grandson Mahmout, a little fellow ten years old, with large black eyes as big as pigeon's eggs, and all the gravity of sixty, asked me what I did travelling so young without a *Lala* (tutor) ?

Good night, dear H. I have crammed my paper, and crave your indulgence. Write to me at Malta. I am with all sincerity,

Yours affectionately,

BYRON.

17. To John Cam Hobhouse²

PATRAS, July 29, 1810.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—The same day which saw

¹ George Hamilton Gordon, Earl of Aberdeen, afterwards Prime Minister. He spent two years in Greece in 1801-3.

² The *Salsette*, in which Hobhouse sailed from Constantinople to England, touched at Zea to land Byron, who was returning to Athens.

me ashore at Zea, set me forth once more upon the high seas, where I had the pleasure of seeing the frigate in the *Doldrums* by the light of sun and moon.

Before daybreak I got into the Attics at Thaskalio, thence I despatched men to Keratia for horses, and in ten hours from landing I was at Athens.

There I was greeted by my Lord Sligo, and next day Messrs. North, Knight, and Fazakerly paid me visits. Sligo has a brig with 50 men who won't work, 12 guns that refuse to go off, and sails that have cut every wind except a contrary one, and then they are as willing as may be. He is sick of the concern, but an engagement of six months prevents him from parting with this precious ark. He *would* travel with me to Corinth, though as you may suppose I was already heartily disgusted with travelling in company. He has "*en suite*" a painter, a captain, a gentleman misinterpreter (who boxes with the painter), besides sundry idle English varlets.

We were obliged to have twenty-nine horses in all.

The captain and the *Drogueman* were left at Athens to kill bullocks for the crew, and the Marquis and the limner, with a ragged Turk by way of Tartar, and the ship's carpenter in the capacity of linguist, with two servants (one of whom had the gripes) clothed both in leather breeches (the thermometer 125°!!), followed over the hills and far away.

On our route, the poor limner in these gentle latitudes was ever and anon condemned to bask for half-an-hour, that he might produce what he himself termed a "*bellissimo sketche*" (pardon

the orthography of the last word) of the surrounding country.

You may also suppose that a man of the Marchese's kidney was not very easy in his seat. As for the *servants*, they and their *leather breeches* were equally immovable at the end of the first stage. Fletcher, too, with his usual acuteness, contrived at Megara to ram his damned clumsy foot into a boiling tea-kettle.

At Corinth we separated, the Marquis for Tripolitza, I for Patras.

Here hath just arrived the chirurgion of the *Spider* from Zante, who will take this letter to Malta. I hope it will find you warm. You cannot conceive what a delightful companion you are now you are gone.

Sligo has told me some things that ought to set you and me by the ears, but they shan't ; and as a proof of it, I won't tell you what they are till we meet, but in the meantime I exhort you to behave well in polite society. His Lordship has been very kind, and as I crossed the Isthmus of Corinth, offered if I chose to take me to that of Darien, but I liked it not, for you have cured me of "villainous company."

I am about—after a Giro of the Morea—to move to Athens again, and thence I know not where ; perhaps to Englonde, Malta, Sicily, Egypt, or the Low Countries.

I suppose you are at Malta or Palermo. I amuse myself alone very much to my satisfaction, riding, bathing, sweating, hearing Mr. Paul's musical clock, looking at his red breeches ; we visit him every evening.

Nourse and Dacres had been at Athens scribbling all sorts of ribaldry over my old apartment,

where Sligo, before my arrival, had added to your B.A. an A.S.S., and scrawled the compliments of Jackson, Deville, Miss Cameron, and "*I am very UNAPPY Sam Jennings.*"

Wallace is incarcerated, and wanted Sligo to bail him, at the "Bell and Savage," Fleet Rules.

The news are not surprising. What think you?

Write to me from Malta, the Mediterranean, or Ingleterra, to care of ὁ μονόλοος Σπράνε.

Have you cleansed my pistols? and dined with the "Gineral?"

18. *To his Mother*

ATHENS, January 14, 1811

MY DEAR MADAM,—I seize an occasion to write as usual, shortly, but frequently, as the arrival of letters, where there exists no regular communication, is, of course, very precarious. I have lately made several small tours of some hundred or two miles about the Morea, Attica, etc., as I have finished my grand giro by the Troad, Constantinople, etc., and am returned down again to Athens. I believe I have mentioned to you more than once that I swam (in imitation of Leander, though without his lady) across the Hellespont, from Sestos to Abydos. Of this, and all other particulars, Fletcher, whom I have sent home with papers, etc., will apprise you. I cannot find that he is any loss; being tolerably master of the Italian and modern Greek languages, which last I am also studying with a master, I can order and discourse more than enough for a reasonable man. Besides, the perpetual lamentations after beef, and beer, the stupid, bigoted contempt for every thing foreign, and insurmountable incapacity of

acquiring even a few words of any language, rendered him, like all other English servants, an incumbrance. I do assure you, the plague of speaking for him, the comforts he required (more than myself by far), the pilaws (a Turkish dish of rice and meat) which he could not eat, the wines which he could not drink, the beds where he could not sleep, and the long list of calamities, such as stumbling horses, want of *tea!!!* etc., which assailed him, would have made a lasting source of laughter to a spectator, and inconvenience to a master. After all, the man is honest enough, and, in Christendom, capable enough; but in Turkey, Lord forgive me! my Albanian soldiers, my Tartars and Jannissary, worked for him and us too, as my friend Hobhouse can testify.

It is probable I may steer homewards in spring; but to enable me to do that, I must have remittances. My own funds would have lasted me very well; but I was obliged to assist a friend, who, I know, will pay me; but, in the mean time, I am out of pocket. At present, I do not care to venture a winter's voyage, even if I were otherwise tired of travelling; but I am so convinced of the advantages of looking at mankind instead of reading about them, and the bitter effects of staying at home with all the narrow prejudices of an islander, that I think there should be a law amongst us, to set our young men abroad, for a term, among the few allies our wars have left us.

Here I see and have conversed with French, Italians, Germans, Danes, Greeks, Turks, Americans, etc., etc., etc.; and without losing sight of my own, I can judge of the countries and manners of others. Where I see the superiority of England (which by the by, we are a good deal mistaken

about in many things), I am pleased, and where I find her inferior, I am at least enlightened. Now, I might have stayed, smoked in your towns, or fogged in your country, a century, without being sure of this, and without acquiring any thing more useful or amusing at home. I keep no journal, nor have I any intention of scribbling my travels. I have done with authorship, and if, in my last production, I have convinced the critics or the world I was something more than they took me for, I am satisfied ; nor will I hazard *that reputation* by a future effort. It is true I have some others in manuscript, but I leave them for those who come after me ; and, if deemed worth publishing, they may serve to prolong my memory when I myself shall cease to remember. I have a famous Bavarian artist taking some views of Athens, etc., etc., for me. This will be better than scribbling, a disease I hope myself cured of. I hope, on my return, to lead a quiet, recluse life, but God knows and does best for us all ; at least, so they say, and I have nothing to object, as, on the whole, I have no reason to complain of my lot. I am convinced, however, that men do more harm to themselves than ever the devil could do to them. I trust this will find you well, and as happy as we can be ; you will, at least, be pleased to hear I am so, and

Yours ever.

III

"CHILDE HAROLD" AND CELEBRITY

(1811-1813)

ON his return to England, Byron had shown Dallas the first two Cantos of *Childe Harold*, which were published by Murray in March 1812. Murray gave £600 for the copyright, and Byron handed over the money to Dallas. The first edition was immediately sold. In Byron's own words "he awoke one morning and found himself famous." The Duchess of Devonshire wrote: "The subject of conversation, of curiosity, of enthusiasm, almost, one might say, of the moment, is not Spain or Portugal, warriors or patriots, but Lord Byron! *Childe Harold* is on every table, and himself courted, visited, flattered, and praised wherever he goes. In short, he is really the only topic almost of every conversation—the men jealous of him, the women jealous of each other."

Childe Harold was followed up in May 1813 by the *Giaour*.

Meanwhile, in February 1813, Byron had spoken for the first time in the House of Lords, with considerable success.

19. To John Cam Hobhouse

NEWSTEAD ABBEY, August 10, 1811.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—From Davies¹ I had

¹ Scrope Berdmore Davies, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge; a popular member of fashionable society.

already received tidings of the death of Matthews,¹ and from *M.* a letter dated the *day* before his *death*. In that letter he mentions you, and as it was perhaps the last he ever wrote, you will derive a poor consolation from hearing that he spoke of you with that affectionate familiarity, so much more pleasing from those we love, than the highest encomiums of the world.

My dwelling you already know is the house of mourning,² and I am really so much bewildered with the different shocks I have sustained, that I can hardly reduce myself to reason by the most frivolous occupations.

My poor friend, J. Wingfield,³ my mother, and your best friend (and surely not the worst of mine), C.S.M., have disappeared in one little month, since *my return*, and without my seeing *either*, though I have *heard* from *all*.

There is to me something so incomprehensible in death, that I can neither speak nor think on the subject. Indeed, when I looked on the mass of corruption which was the being from whence I sprung, I doubted within myself whether I *was*, or whether she *was not*.

I have lost her who gave me being, and some of those who made that being a blessing. I have neither hopes nor fears beyond the grave, yet if there is within us "a spark of that Celestial fire,"⁴

¹ Charles Skinner Matthews, scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge; Ninth Wrangler; Fellow of Downing College. He was drowned in the Cam in August 1811.

² Mrs. Byron died on 1 August, 1811.

³ John Wingfield was at Harrow with Byron. He is the "Alonzo" of "Childish Recollections," and the subject of *Childe Harold*, Canto I, stanza xci.

⁴ Gray's *Elegy*, l. 46.

Matthews has already "mingled with the gods."

In the room where I now write (flanked by the *skulls*¹ you have seen so often) did you and Matthews and myself pass some joyous unprofitable evenings, and here we will drink to his memory, which though it cannot reach the dead, will soothe the survivors, and to them only death can be an evil.

I can neither receive nor administer consolation; time will do it for us; in the interim let me see or hear from you, if possible both.

I am very lonely, and should think myself miserable were it not for a kind of hysterical merriment, which I can neither account for nor conquer; but strange as it is, I do laugh, and heartily, wondering at myself while I sustain it.

I have tried reading, and boxing, and swimming, and writing, and rising early, and sitting late, and water, and wine, with a number of ineffectual remedies, and here I am, wretched, but not "melancholy or gentlemanlike."

My dear "*Cam of the Cornish*"² (Matthews's last expression!!) may man or God give you the happiness which I wish rather than expect you may attain; believe me, none living are more sincerely yours than

BYRON.

The next letter is to John Murray, who accepted

¹ Thus at Newstead Byron had a human skull, found near the Abbey, fashioned into a drinking cup.

² Hobhouse's father came from Bristol, his mother from Wiltshire. His father was at one time M.P. for Grampound, Cornwall, and President of the Bath and West of England Society. This is the only connexion with Cornwall I have been able to trace.

Childe Harold for publication, and thus began a permanent connection with Byron. John Murray, the first (1745-1792), had a bookselling and publishing business in Fleet Street. After his death John Murray the second (1778-1843) conducted the business with a partner, but in 1803 he started for himself, and soon by his energy, shrewdness, and literary enthusiasm became, as Byron calls him, "the *Ἀναξ* of Publishers," or, as he was nicknamed, "The Emperor of the West." In 1809 he launched the *Quarterly Review*. In 1812 he published *Childe Harold*, and moved to 50 Albemarle Street. His close relations with Byron lasted to the poet's death. He was the first to divorce the business of publishing from that of selling books. He was the acknowledged head of the publishing trade, and published for Jane Austen, Borrow, Crabbe, and many other famous writers. He was renowned for his generous dealings with authors, and his interest in letters and his hospitality made him the friend of the most distinguished men of the day and his house one of the chief literary centres of London.

20. To John Murray

NEWSTEAD ABBEY, NOTTS., August 23, 1811.

SIR,—A domestic calamity in the death of a near relation has hitherto prevented my addressing you on the subject of this letter.—My friend, Mr. Dallas, has placed in your hands a manuscript poem¹ written by me in Greece, which he tells

¹ *Childe Harold*, I and II.

me you do not object to publishing. But he also informed me in London that you wished to send the MS. to Mr. Gifford.¹ Now, though no one would feel more gratified by the chance of obtaining his observations on a work than myself, there is in such a proceeding a kind of petition for praise, that neither my pride—or whatever you please to call it—will admit. Mr. G. is not only the first satirist of the day, but editor of one of the principal reviews. As such, he is the last man whose censure (however eager to avoid it) I would deprecate by clandestine means. You will therefore retain the manuscript in your own care, or, if it must needs be shown, send it to another. Though not very patient of censure, I would fain obtain fairly any little praise my rhymes might deserve, at all events not by extortion, and the humble solicitations of a bandied-about MS. I am sure a little consideration will convince you it would be wrong.

If you determine on publication, I have some smaller poems (never published), a few notes, and a short dissertation on the literature of the modern Greeks (written at Athens), which will come in at the end of the volume.—And, if the present poem should succeed, it is my intention, at some subsequent period, to publish some selections from my first work,—my Satire,—another nearly the same length, and a few other things, with the MS. now in your hands, in two volumes.—But of these hereafter. You will apprise me of your determination.

I am, Sir, your very obedient, humble servant,
 BYRON.

¹ Editor of the *Quarterly Review*.

21. To John Murray¹NEWSTEAD ABBEY, NOTTS., *September 5, 1811.*

SIR,—The time seems to be past when (as Dr. Johnson said) a man was certain to “hear the truth from his bookseller,” for you have paid me so many compliments, that, if I was not the veriest scribbler on earth, I should feel affronted. As I accept your compliments, it is but fair I should give equal or greater credit to your objections, the more so as I believe them to be well founded. With regard to the political and metaphysical parts, I am afraid I can alter nothing; but I have high authority for my Errors in that point, for even the *Æneid* was a *political* poem, and written for a *political* purpose; and as to my unlucky opinions on Subjects of more importance, I am too sincere in them for recantation. On Spanish affairs I have said what I

¹ The following is the letter from Murray to which Byron replied:—

LONDON, *Sept. 4, 1811, Wednesday.*

MY LORD.—An absence of some days, passed in the country, has prevented me from writing earlier in answer to your obliging letter. I have now, however, the pleasure of sending under a separate cover, the first proof sheet of your Lordship's *Poem*, which is so good as to be entitled to all your care to render perfect. Besides its general merit, there are parts, which, I am tempted to believe, far excel anything that your Lordship has hitherto published, and it were therefore grievous indeed, if you do not condescend to bestow upon it all the improvement of which your Lordship's mind is so capable; every correction already made is valuable, and this circumstance renders me more confident in soliciting for it your further attention.

There are some expressions, too, concerning Spain and Portugal, which, however just, and particularly so at the time they were conceived, yet as they do not harmonize with the general feeling, would so greatly interfere with the popularity which the poem is, in other respects, so certainly calculated to excite, that, in compassion to your publisher, who does not presume to reason upon

saw, and every day confirms me in that notion of the result formed on the Spot ; and I rather think honest John Bull is beginning to come round again to that Sobriety which Massena's retreat had begun to reel from its centre—the usual consequence of *unusual* success. So you perceive I cannot alter the Sentiments ; but if there are any alterations in the structure of the versification you would wish to be made, I will tag rhymes and turn stanzas as much as you please. As for the "*Orthodox*," let us hope they will buy, on purpose to abuse—you will forgive the one, if they will do the other. You are aware that any thing from my pen must expect no quarter, on many accounts ; and as the present publication is of a nature very different from the former, we must not be sanguine.

the subject, otherwise than as a mere matter of business, I hope your Lordship's goodness will induce you to obviate them, and, with them, perhaps, some religious feelings which may deprive me of some customers amongst the *Orthodox*.

Could I flatter myself that these suggestions were not obtrusive, I would hazard another, in an earnest solicitation that your Lordship would add the two promised Cantos, and complete the *Poem*. It were cruel indeed not to perfect a work which contains so much that is excellent ; your Fame, my Lord, demands it ; you are raising a Monument that will outlive your present feelings, and it should therefore be so constructed as to excite no other associations than those of respect and admiration for your Lordship's Character and Genius.

I trust that you will pardon the warmth of this address when I assure your Lordship that it arises, in the greatest degree, in a sincere regard for your lasting reputation, with, however, some view to that portion of it, which must attend the Publisher of so beautiful a Poem, as your Lordship is capable of rendering

The Romaunt of Childe Harold.

I have the honour to be, My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Obedient and faithful servant,

JOHN MURRAY.

You have given me no answer to my question—tell me fairly, did you show the MS. to some of your corps?—I sent an introductory stanza to Mr. Dallas, that it might be forwarded to you; the poem else will open too abruptly. The Stanzas had better be numbered in Roman characters, there is a disquisition on the literature of the modern Greeks, and some smaller poems to come in at the close. These are now at Newstead, but will be sent in time. If Mr. D. has lost the Stanza and note annexed to it, write, and I will send it myself.—You tell me to add two cantos, but I am about to visit my *Collieries* in Lancashire on the 15th instant, which is so *unpoetical* an employment that I need say no more.

I am sir, your most obedient, etc., etc., BYRON.

22. To R. C. Dallas

NEWSTEAD ABBEY, Sept. 7th, 1811.

As Gifford has been ever my “Magnus Apollo,” any approbation, such as you mention, would, of course, be more welcome than “all Bocara’s vaunted gold, than all the gems of Samarcand.”¹ But I am sorry the MS. was shown to him in such a manner, and had written to Murray to say as much, before I was aware that it was too late.

Your objection to the expression “central line” I can only meet by saying that, before Childe Harold left England, it was his full intention to traverse Persia, and return by India, which he could not have done without passing the equinoctial.

The other errors you mention, I must correct in the progress through the press. I feel honoured by the wish of such men that the poem should be

¹ From Sir W. Jones’s translation of a song by Hafiz.

continued, but to do that I must return to Greece and Asia ; I must have a warm sun, a blue sky ; I cannot describe scenes so dear to me by a sea-coal fire. I had projected an additional canto when I was in the Troad and Constantinople, and if I saw them again, it would go on ; but under existing circumstances and *sensations*, I have neither harp, "heart, nor voice"¹ to proceed. I feel that *you are all right* as to the metaphysical part ; but I also feel that I am sincere, and that if I am only to write "*ad captandum vulgus*," I might as well edit a magazine at once, or spin canzonettas for Vauxhall.²

My work must make its way as well as it can ; I know I have every thing against me, angry poets and prejudices ; but if the poem is a *poem*, it will surmount these obstacles, and if *not*, it deserves its fate. Your friend's Ode³ I have read—it is no great compliment to pronounce it far superior to Smythe's⁴ on the same subject, or to the merits of the new Chancellor. It is evidently the production of a man of taste, and a poet, though I should not be willing to say it was fully equal to what might be expected from the author of *Horæ Ionicæ*. I thank you for it, and that is more than I would do for any other Ode of the present day.

I am very sensible of your good wishes, and, indeed, I have need of them. My whole life has been at variance with propriety, not to say decency ; my circumstances are become involved ;

¹ Cf. the penultimate line of the National Anthem.

² Vauxhall Gardens.

³ An ode on the installation of the Duke of Gloucester as Chancellor of Cambridge University, by Walter Rodwell Wright.

⁴ W. Smyth.

my friends are dead or estranged, and my existence a dreary void. In Matthews I have lost my "guide, philosopher, and friend;"¹ in Wingfield a friend only, but one whom I could have wished to have preceded in his long journey.

Matthews was indeed an extraordinary man; it has not entered into the heart of a stranger to conceive such a man: there was the stamp of immortality in all he said or did;—and now what is he? When we see such men pass away and be no more—men, who seem created to display what the Creator *could make* his creatures, gathered into corruption, before the maturity of minds that might have been the pride of posterity, what are we to conclude? For my own part, I am bewildered. To me he was much, to Hobhouse every thing. My poor Hobhouse doted on Matthews. For me, I did not love quite so much as I honoured him; I was indeed so sensible of his infinite superiority, that though I did not envy, I stood in awe of it. He, Hobhouse, Davies, and myself, formed a coterie of our own at Cambridge and elsewhere. Davies is a wit and man of the world, and feels as much as such a character can do; but not as Hobhouse has been affected. Davies, who is not a scribbler, has always beaten us all in the war of words, and by his colloquial powers at once delighted and kept us in order. Hobhouse and myself always had the worst of it with the other two; and even Matthews yielded to the dashing vivacity of Scrope Davies. But I am talking to you of men, or boys, as if you cared about such things.

I expect mine agent down on the 14th to proceed

¹ Pope, *Essay on Man*, Epistle IV.

to Lancashire, where I hear from all quarters that I have a very valuable property in coals, etc. I then intend to accept an invitation to Cambridge in October, and shall, perhaps, run up to town. I have four invitations—to Wales, Dorset, Cambridge, and Chester; but I must be a man of business. I am quite alone, as these long letters sadly testify. I perceive, by referring to your letter, that the Ode is from the author; make my thanks acceptable to him. His muse is worthy a nobler theme. You will write as usual, I hope. I wish you good evening, and am, etc.

23. *To the Hon. Augusta Leigh*

NEWSTEAD ABBEY, Sept. 9th, 1811.

MY DEAR AUGUSTA,—My Rochdale affairs are understood to be settled as far as the Law can settle them, and indeed I am told that the most valuable part is that which was never disputed; but I have never reaped any advantage from them, and God knows if I ever shall. Mr. H.,¹ my agent, is a good man and able, but the most dilatory in the world. I expect him down on the 14th to accompany me to Rochdale, where something will be decided as to selling or working the Collieries. I am Lord of the Manor (a most extensive one), and they want to enclose, which cannot be done without me; but I go there in the worst humour possible and am afraid I shall do or say something not very conciliatory. In short all my affairs are going on as badly as possible, and I have no hopes or plans to better them as I long ago pledged myself never to sell Newstead, which I mean to hold in defiance of the Devil and Man.

¹ John Hanson.

I am quite alone and never see strangers without being sick, but I am nevertheless on good terms with my neighbours, for I neither ride or shoot or move over my Garden walls, but I fence and box and swim and run a good deal to keep me in exercise and get me to sleep. Poor Murray¹ is ill again, and one of my Greek servants is ill too, and my valet has got a pestilent cough, so that we are in a peck of troubles; my family Surgeon sent an Emetic this morning for *one* of them, I did not very well know *which*, but I swore *Somebody* should take it, so after a deal of discussion the Greek swallowed it with tears in his eyes, and by the blessing of it, and the *Virgin* whom he invoked to assist *it* and *him*, I suppose he'll be well tomorrow, if not, *another* shall have the *next*. So your Spouse likes children, *that* is lucky as he will have to bring them up; for my part (since I lost my Newfoundland dog,) I like nobody except his successor a Dutch Mastiff and three land Tortoises brought with me from Greece.

I thank you for your letters and am always glad to hear from you, but if you won't come here before Xmas, I very much fear we shall not meet *here* at all, for I shall be off somewhere or other very soon out of this land of Paper credit (or rather no credit at all, for every body seems on the high road to Bankruptcy), and if I quit it again I shall not be back in a hurry.

However, I shall endeavour to see you somewhere, and make my bow with decorum before I return to the Ottomans, I believe I shall turn Mussulman in the end.

You ask after my health; I am in tolerable

¹ Joseph Murray.

leanness, which I promote by exercise and abstinence. I don't know that I have acquired any thing by my travels but a smattering of two languages and a habit of chewing Tobacco.

Yours ever,

B.

24. To Francis Hodgson

NEWSTEAD ABBEY, September 13, 1811.

MY DEAR HODGSON,—I thank you for your song, or, rather, your two songs,—your new song on love, and your *old song* on *religion*. I admire the *first* sincerely, and in turn call upon you to *admire* the following on Anacreon Moore's new operatic farce,¹ or farcical opera—call it which you will:—

Good plays are scarce,
So Moore writes *Farce*;
Is Fame like his so brittle?
We knew before
That "*Little's*" Moore,
But now 'tis Moore that's *Little*.

I won't dispute with you on the Arcana of your new calling;² they are Bagatelles like the King of Poland's rosary. One remark, and I have done; the basis of your religion is *injustice*; the *Son of God*, the *pure*, the *immaculate*, the *innocent*, is sacrificed for the *Guilty*. This proves *His* heroism; but no more does away *man's* guilt than a schoolboy's volunteering to be flogged for another would exculpate the dunce from negligence, or preserve him from the Rod. You

¹ Thomas Moore's first publication was a translation of Anacreon. This was followed by a volume of poems published under the pseudonym of "Thomas Little." In 1811 his *M.P., or the Bluestocking* was produced at the Lyceum, but was soon withdrawn.

² In 1812 he took Holy Orders.

degrade the Creator, in the first place, by making Him a begetter of children ; and in the next you convert Him into a Tyrant over an immaculate and injured Being, who is sent into existence to suffer death for the benefit of some millions of Scoundrels, who, after all, seem as likely to be damned as ever. As to miracles, I agree with Hume that it is more probable men should *lie* or be *deceived*, than that things out of the course of Nature should so happen. Mahomet wrought miracles, Brothers¹ the prophet had *proselytes*, and so would Breslaw the conjuror, had he lived in the time of Tiberius.

Besides I trust that God is not a *Jew*, but the God of all Mankind ; and as you allow that a virtuous Gentile may be saved, you do away the necessity of being a Jew or a Christian.

I do not believe in any revealed religion, because no religion is revealed : and if it pleases the Church to damn me for not allowing a *nonentity*, I throw myself on the mercy of the "*Great First Cause, least understood*," who must do what is most proper ; though I conceive He never made anything to be tortured in another life, whatever it may in this. I will neither read *pro* nor *con*. God would have made His will known without books, considering how very few could read them when Jesus of Nazareth lived, had it been His pleasure to ratify any peculiar mode of worship. As to your immortality, if people are to live, why die ? And our carcases, which are to rise again, are they worth raising ? I hope, if mine is, that I shall have a better *pair of legs* than I have

¹ Richard Brothers (1757-1824) believed that he was to be revealed as Prince of the Hebrews and ruler of the world.

moved on these two-and-twenty years, or I shall be sadly behind in the squeeze into Paradise. Did you ever read "Malthus on Population"? If he be right, war and pestilence are our best friends, to save us from being eaten alive, in this "best of all possible Worlds."¹

I will write, read, and think no more; indeed, I do not wish to shock your prejudices by saying all I do think. Let us make the most of life, and leave dreams to Emanuel Swedenborg.

Now to dreams of another genus—Poesies. I like your song much; but I will say no more, for fear you should think I wanted to scratch you into approbation of my past, present, or future acrostics. I shall not be at Cambridge before the middle of October; but, when I go, I should certes like to see you there before you are dubbed a deacon. Write to me, and I will rejoin.

Yours ever,

BYRON.

25. *To William Harness*²

ST. JAMES'S STREET, Dec. 8, 1811.

Behold a most formidable sheet, without gilt or black edging, and consequently very vulgar and indecorous, particularly to one of your precision; but this being Sunday, I can procure no better, and will atone for its length by not filling it. Bland³ I have not seen since my last letter;

¹ *Candide*, Ch. xxx.

² The Rev. William Harness. He wrote a life of Mary Russell Mitford, and edited Shakespeare and other dramatists. At Harrow Byron, taking pity on his weakness and lameness, protected him from the bullies of the school. He intended to dedicate *Childe Harold* to him, but desisted from fear that it might injure him in his profession.

³ Rev. Robert Bland was an assistant master at Harrow when Byron was there. He translated the minor Greek poets, and wrote some original verse.

but on Tuesday he dines with me, and will meet Moore, the epitome of all that is exquisite in poetical or personal accomplishments. How Bland has settled with Miller,¹ I know not. I have very little interest with either, and they must arrange their concerns according to their own gusto. I have done my endeavours, *at your request*, to bring them together, and hope they may agree to their mutual advantage.

Coleridge has been lecturing against Campbell. Rogers was present, and from him I derive the information. We are going to make a party to hear this Manichean of poesy.² Pole³ is to marry Miss Long, and will be a very miserable dog for all that. The present ministers are to continue, and his Majesty *does* continue in the same state; so there's folly and madness for you, both in a breath.

I never heard but of one man truly fortunate, and he was Beaumarchais,⁴ the author of *Figaro*, who buried two wives and gained three lawsuits before he was thirty.

And now, child, what art thou doing? *Reading, I trust.* I want to see you take a degree. Remember, this is the most important period of your life; and don't disappoint your papa and your aunt, and all your kin—besides myself. Don't you know that all male children are begotten for the express purpose of being graduates?

¹ William Miller, whose lease and publishing business John Murray bought, when he moved to Albemarle Street in 1812.

² Perhaps an allusion to Cowper's *Task*, V, 444.

³ William Wellesley Pole Wellesley, afterwards Earl of Mornington.

⁴ Beaumarchais, however, who was born in 1732, lost his first wife in 1757, his second in 1770, and had only one lawsuit before he was thirty.

and that even I am an A.M.,¹ though how I became so the Public Orator only can resolve. Besides, you are to be a priest; and to confute Sir William Drummond's late book about the Bible² (printed, but not published), and all other infidels whatever. Now leave Master H.'s gig, and Master S.'s Sapphics, and become as immortal as Cambridge can make you.

You see, *Mio Carissimo*, what a pestilent correspondent I am likely to become; but then you shall be as quiet at Newstead as you please, and I won't disturb your studies as I do now. When do you fix the day, that I may take you up according to contract? Hodgson talks of making a third in our journey; but we can't stow him, inside at least. Positively you shall go with me as was agreed, and don't let me have any of your *politesse* to H. on the occasion. I shall manage to arrange for both with a little contrivance. I wish H. was not quite so fat, and we should pack better. You will want to know what I am doing—chewing tobacco.

You see nothing of my allies, Scrope Davies and Matthews³—they don't suit you; and how does it happen that I—who am a pipkin of the same pottery—continue in your good graces? Good night,—I will go on in the morning.

Dec. 9th.—In a morning I am always sullen, and to-day is as sombre as myself. Rain and mist are worse than a sirocco, particularly in a beef-eating and beer-drinking country. My book-

¹ Byron took his M.A. degree at Cambridge in 1808.

² *Œdipus Judaicus*, which attempted to explain many parts of the Old Testament as astronomical allegories.

³ Henry Matthews (1789–1828), author of the *Diary of an Invalid* (1820).

seller, Cawthorne, has just left me, and tells me, with a most important face, that he is in treaty for a novel of Madame D'Arblay's, for which 1000 guineas are asked!¹ He wants me to read the MS. (if he obtains it), which I shall do with pleasure; but I should be very cautious in venturing an opinion on her whose *Cecilia* Dr. Johnson superintended.² If he lends it to me, I shall put it in the hands of Rogers and Moore, who are truly men of taste. I have filled the sheet, and beg your pardon; I will not do it again. I shall, perhaps, write again; but if not, believe, silent or scribbling, that I am,

My dearest William, ever, etc.

Thomas Moore, to whom the next letter is written, was nearly ten years Byron's senior, and was already well-known when he made Byron's acquaintance in 1811. Provoked by a notice of his poems in the *Edinburgh Review*, he had challenged Jeffrey, the editor, to a duel. Moore, who had only once in his life discharged a firearm, and then nearly blew off his thumb, borrowed some pistols, and bought enough ammunition to arm a platoon of soldiers. The parties met, but before a shot was fired, police officers intervened, and conveyed them to Bow Street, whence they were released on bail. It got about that Moore's pistol had been loaded with powder only, and though Moore published a denial of this, he be-

¹ *The Wanderer, or Female Difficulties* was published in 1814. She was to have received £3,000 altogether, after the sale of 8,000 copies, but the book failed.

² Dr. Johnson did not see *Cecilia* (1782) until it was in print, a day or two before it was published.

came a target for the wits, and in *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* Byron made merry over "Little's leadless pistol." Moore thereupon wrote to Byron inquiring if he intended to give him the lie. A reply from Byron that he had not read the denial composed the matter, and the correspondence led to a meeting of Byron and Moore at the house of Samuel Rogers, Thomas Campbell also being present. The acquaintance quickly ripened into close and affectionate friendship. Byron spoke of Moore as "a delightful companion, gay without being boisterous, witty without effort, comic without coarseness, and sentimental without being lachrymose. He reminds one of the fairy who, whenever she spoke, let diamonds fall from her lips. My *tête-à-tête* suppers with Moore are among the most agreeable impressions I retain of the hours passed in London." Byron was probably fonder of him than of any other of his friends, and Moore's name will ever be associated with that of his more famous fellow-poet, for his loyalty to him during his life, and after his death for his biography.

26. To Thomas Moore

December 11, 1811.

MY DEAR MOORE,—If you please, we will drop our former monosyllables, and adhere to the appellations sanctioned by our godfathers and godmothers. If you make it a point, I will withdraw your name;¹ at the same time there is no occasion, as I have this day postponed your election

¹ For election to the Alfred Club.

sine die, till it shall suit your wishes to be amongst us. I do not say this from any awkwardness the erasure of your proposal would occasion to *me*, but simply such is the state of the case; and, indeed, the longer your name is up, the stronger will become your probability of success, and your voters more numerous. Of course you will decide—your wish shall be my law. If my zeal has already outrun discretion, pardon me, and attribute my officiousness to an excusable motive.

I wish you would go down with me to Newstead. Hodgson will be there, and a young friend, named Harness, the earliest and dearest I ever had from the third form at Harrow to this hour. I can promise you good wine, and, if you like shooting, a manor of 4000 acres, fires, books, your own free will, and my own very indifferent company. *Balnea, vina, Venus.*¹

Hodgson will plague you, I fear, with verse;—for my own part I will conclude, with Martial, *nil recitabo tibi*; ² and surely the last inducement, is not the least. Ponder on my proposition, and believe me, my dear Moore,

Yours ever,

BYRON.

On 27th February, 1812, Byron made his first speech in the House of Lords. He spoke, on its second reading, against a Bill increasing the severity of punishments for frame-breaking. Owing to the state of trade, numbers of stocking-weavers had lost work, and the discontent thus produced was increased by the introduction of a wide frame which was thought to threaten a further diminution in the demand for manual labour.

¹ Sc. *corrumpunt corpora nostra*.

² Martial, XI, lii, 16.

Riots by organized bands of men had broken into houses and destroyed the machinery. The Bill passed its second and third reading and became law.

Lord Holland, to whom the following letter is addressed, was the Whig statesman, scholar, wit, and writer of verse and memoirs. Byron attacked him in *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*, on the supposition that he had instigated the article in the *Edinburgh Review* on *Hours of Idleness*. In 1812, on learning his mistake, he gave orders that the whole impression should be burnt.

27. To Lord Holland

8, ST. JAMES'S STREET, February 25, 1812.

MY LORD,—With my best thanks, I have the honour to return the Notts. letter to your Lordship. I have read it with attention, but do not think I shall venture to avail myself of its contents, as my view of the question differs in some measure from Mr. Coldham's. I hope I do not wrong him, but *his* objections to the bill appear to me to be founded on certain apprehensions that he and his coadjutors might be mistaken for the "*original advisers*" (to quote him) of the measure. For my own part, I consider the manufacturers as a much injured body of men, sacrificed to the views of certain individuals who have enriched themselves by those practices which have deprived the framers of employment. For instance;—by the adoption of a certain kind of frame, one man performs the work of seven—six are thus thrown out of business. But it is to be observed that the work thus done is far inferior in quality, hardly

marketable at home, and hurried over with a view to exportation. Surely, my Lord, however we may rejoice in any improvement in the arts which may be beneficial to mankind, we must not allow mankind to be sacrificed to improvements in mechanism. The maintenance and well-doing of the industrious poor is an object of greater consequence to the community than the enrichment of a few monopolists by any improvement in the implements of trade, which deprives the workman of his bread, and renders the labourer "unworthy of his hire."

My own motive for opposing the bill is founded on its palpable injustice, and its certain inefficacy. I have seen the state of these miserable men, and it is a disgrace to a civilized country. Their excesses may be condemned, but cannot be subject of wonder. The effect of the present bill would be to drive them into actual rebellion. The few words I shall venture to offer on Thursday will be founded upon these opinions formed from my own observations on the spot. By previous inquiry, I am convinced these men would have been restored to employment, and the country to tranquillity. It is, perhaps, not yet too late, and is surely worth the trial. It can never be too late to employ force in such circumstances. I believe your Lordship does not coincide with me entirely on this subject, and most cheerfully and sincerely shall I submit to your superior judgment and experience, and take some other line of argument against the bill, or be silent altogether, should you deem it more advisable. Condemning, as every one must condemn, the conduct of these wretches, I believe in the existence of grievances which call rather for pity than punishment. I

have the honour to be, with great respect, my Lord, your Lordship's

Most obedient and obliged servant, BYRON.

P.S.—I am a little apprehensive that your Lordship will think me too lenient towards these men, and half a *frame-breaker* myself.

28. To Francis Hodgson

ST. JAMES'S STREET, March 5, 1812.

MY DEAR HODGSON,—*We* are not answerable for reports of speeches in the papers; they are always given incorrectly, and on this occasion more so than usual, from the debate in the Commons on the same night. The *Morning Post* should have said *eighteen years*. However, you will find the speech, as spoken, in the Parliamentary Register, when it comes out. Lords Holland and Grenville, particularly the latter, paid me some high compliments in the course of their speeches, as you may have seen in the papers, and Lords Eldon and Harrowby answered me. I have had many marvellous eulogies repeated to me since, in person and by proxy, from divers persons *ministerial*—yea, *ministerial*!—as well as oppositionists; of them I shall only mention Sir F. Burdett. *He* says it is the best speech by a *lord* since the "*Lord* knows when," probably from a fellow-feeling in the sentiments. Lord H. tells me I shall beat them all if I persevere; and Lord G. remarked that the construction of some of my periods are very like *Burke's*!! And so much for vanity. I spoke very violent sentences with a sort of modest impudence, abused every thing and everybody, and put the Lord Chancellor very much out of humour: and if I may believe what

I hear, have not lost any character by the experiment. As to my delivery, loud and fluent enough, perhaps a little theatrical. I could not recognize myself or anyone else in the newspapers.

I hire myself unto Griffiths,¹ and my poesy comes out on Saturday. Hobhouse is here; I shall tell him to write. My stone is gone for the present, but I fear is part of my habit. We *all* talk of a visit to Cambridge.

Yours ever.

B.

29. To Lord Holland

ST. JAMES'S STREET, March 5, 1812.

MY LORD,—May I request your Lordship to accept a copy of the thing which accompanies this note? You have already so fully proved the truth of the first line of Pope's couplet,²

“Forgiveness to the injured doth belong,”

that I long for an opportunity to give the lie to the verse that follows. If I were not perfectly convinced that any thing I may have formerly uttered in the boyish rashness of my misplaced resentment had made as little impression as it deserved to make, I should hardly have the confidence—perhaps your Lordship may give it a stronger and more appropriate appellation—to send you a quarto of the same scribbler. But your Lordship, I am sorry to observe to-day, is troubled with the gout; if my book can produce a *laugh* against itself or the author, it will be of some service. If it can set you to *sleep*, the benefit will be yet greater; and as some facetious per-

¹ Editor of the *Monthly Review*, to which Byron contributed some articles.

² It is by Dryden (*Conquest of Grenada*, Part II, i, ii).

sonage observed half a century ago, that "poetry is a mere drug," I offer you mine as a humble assistant to the *eau médicinale*. I trust you will forgive this and all my other buffooneries, and believe me to be, with great respect,

Your Lordship's obliged and sincere servant,
BYRON.

The next letter is written to Lady Caroline Lamb, the daughter of Frederick Ponsonby, Earl of Bessborough. In 1805 she married William Lamb, afterwards Lord Melbourne, the statesman. Augustus Foster, writing to his mother in that year, says, "I cannot fancy Lady Caroline Lamb married. How changed she must be—the delicate Ariel, the little Fairy Queen become a wife, and soon perhaps, a mother," to which Lady Elizabeth Foster replied, "You may retract all your sorrow about Caro Ponsonby's marriage, for she is the same wild, delicate, odd, delightful person, unlike anything." In 1812 she refused to be introduced to Byron, of whom she made an entry in her diary—"mad, bad and dangerous to know." But they met a few days later, and for the next few months Byron was a daily visitor at her house in Whitehall.

30. *Lady Caroline Lamb*

May 1st, 1812.

MY DEAR LADY CAROLINE,—I have read over the few poems of Miss Millbank¹ with attention.

¹ Anna Isabella ("Annabella") Milbanke, the future Lady Byron, the only child of Sir Ralph Milbanke and the Hon. Judith Noel, daughter of Lord Wentworth. She was first brought to Byron's notice by Lady Caroline Lamb.

They display fancy, feeling, and a little practice would very soon induce facility of expression. Though I have an abhorrence of Blank Verse, I like the lines on Dermody¹ so much that I wish they were in rhyme. The lines in the Cave at Seaham have a turn of thought which I cannot sufficiently commend, and here I am at least candid as my own opinions differ upon such subjects. The first stanza is very good indeed, and the others, with a few slight alterations, might be rendered equally excellent. The last are smooth and pretty. But these are all, has she no others? She certainly is a very extraordinary girl; who would imagine so much strength and variety of thought under that placid Countenance? It is not necessary for Miss M. to be an authoress, indeed I do not think publishing at all creditable either to men or women, and (though you will not believe me) very often feel ashamed of it myself; but I have no hesitation in saying that she has talents which, were it proper or requisite to indulge, would have led to distinction.

A friend of mine (fifty years old, and an author, but not *Rogers*) has just been here. As there is no name to the MSS. I showed them to him, and he was much more enthusiastic in his praises than I have been. He thinks them beautiful; I shall content myself with observing that they are better, much better, than anything of Miss M.'s protégé Blacket.² You will say as much of this to Miss M. as you think proper. I say all this

¹ Thomas Dermody (1775-1802). His collected verses appeared in 1807 under the title of *The Harp of Erin*.

² Joseph Blacket, a cobbler, who wrote verses. Miss Milbanke befriended him.

very sincerely. I have no desire to be better acquainted with Miss Milbank; she is too good for a fallen spirit to know, and I should like her more if she were less perfect.

Believe me, yours ever most truly, B.

Byron's correspondence with Sir Walter Scott, which begins with the following letter, laid the foundation of a firm friendship between the two poets. Scott had been annoyed by the attack made on him in *English Bards* by "a young whelp of a Lord Byron." Murray, hoping to heal the breach, wrote to Scott giving an account of a conversation Byron had had about Scott's poetry with the Prince Regent, whom he had met at a ball in June 1812. "Lord Byron called upon me," wrote Murray, "merely to let off the raptures of the Prince respecting you, thinking, as he said, that if I were likely to have occasion to write to you, it might not be ungrateful for you to hear of his praises." Scott's answer to Murray enclosed a letter from himself to Byron written in warm terms of admiration, to which Byron replied with the letter given in the text.

Byron and Scott met for the first time in 1815 at John Murray's house. Byron had a great admiration of Scott's writings, especially of the novels, from which he very frequently quotes in his letters.

31. *To Walter Scott*

ST. JAMES'S STREET, July 6, 1812.

SIR,—I have just been honoured with your letter.—I feel sorry that you should have thought

it worth while to notice the "evil works of my nonage,"¹ as the thing is suppressed *voluntarily*, and your explanation is too kind not to give me pain. The Satire was written when I was very young and very angry, and fully bent on displaying my wrath and my wit, and now I am haunted by the ghosts of my wholesale assertions. I cannot sufficiently thank you for your praise; and now, waving myself, let me talk to you of the Prince Regent. He ordered me to be presented to him at a ball; and after some sayings peculiarly pleasing from royal lips, as to my own attempts, he talked to me of you and your immortalities: he preferred you to every bard past and present, and asked which of your works pleased me most. It was a difficult question. I answered, I thought the *Lay*. He said his own opinion was nearly similar. In speaking of the others, I told him that I thought you more particularly the poet of *Princes*, as *they* never appeared more fascinating than in *Marmion* and the *Lady of the Lake*. He was pleased to coincide, and to dwell on the description of your Jameses as no less royal than poetical. He spoke alternately of Homer and yourself, and seemed well acquainted with both; so that (with the exception of the Turks² and your humble servant) you were in very good company. I defy Murray to have exaggerated his Royal Highness's opinion of your powers, nor can I pretend to enumerate all he said on the subject; but it may give you pleasure to hear that it was conveyed in language which would only suffer by my attempting to transcribe it, and with a tone and taste which gave me a

¹ *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers.*

² The Turkish Ambassador and suite were at the ball.

very high idea of his abilities and accomplishments, which I had hitherto considered as confined to *manners*, certainly superior to those of any living *gentleman*.

This interview was accidental. I never went to the levee; for having seen the courts of Mussulman and Catholic sovereigns, my curiosity was sufficiently allayed; and my politics being as perverse as my rhymes, I had, in fact, "no business there." To be thus praised by your Sovereign must be gratifying to you; and if that gratification is not alloyed by the communication being made through me, the bearer of it will consider himself very fortunately and sincerely,

Your obliged and obedient servant, BYRON.

P.S.—Excuse this scrawl, scratched in a great hurry, and just after a journey.

The next letter, to Lady Caroline Lamb, was written on the occasion when Lady Bessborough had urged her daughter to leave London for Ireland. Lady Caroline Lamb had implored Byron to fly with her, but Byron refused, and conducted her back to Melbourne House. From Ireland she threatened to follow him into Herefordshire, where he was on a visit to Lady Oxford—demanding interviews, and writing to Lady Oxford. Counsell'd by Lady Melbourne to give up Lady Caroline, whose extravagant behaviour no doubt wearied a cooling passion, Byron was growing attached to Miss Milbanke, and when, on his first proposal, rejected by her, to Lady Oxford and later to Lady Frances Wedderburn Webster. In about Nov. 1812 Byron wrote

Lady Caroline Lamb a letter, which she purports to give in her novel *Glenarvon* (1816), stating that he was attached to another.

In December 1812 Lady Caroline burnt Byron in effigy at Brocket Hall. In 1813, at a party at which Byron was present, she created a scene by wounding herself with a table-knife (or, according to another account, with a piece of broken glass). She continued to write to Byron up to the time of his departure from England in 1816.

32. *To Lady Caroline Lamb*

[August, 1812.]

MY DEAREST CAROLINE,—If tears which you saw and know I am not apt to shed,—if the agitation in which I parted from you,—agitation which you must have perceived through the *whole* of this most *nervous* affair, did not commence until the moment of leaving you approached,—if all I have said and done, and am still but too ready to say and do, have not sufficiently proved what my real feelings are, and must ever be towards you, my love, I have no other proof to offer. God knows, I wish you happy, and when I quit you, or rather you, from a sense of duty to your husband and mother, quit me, you shall acknowledge the truth of what I again promise and vow, that no other in word or deed, shall ever hold the place in my affections, which is, and shall be, most sacred to you, till I am nothing. I never knew till *that moment* the *madness* of my dearest and most beloved friend; I cannot express myself; this is no time for words, but I shall have a pride, a melancholy pleasure, in suffering what you your-

self can scarcely conceive, for you do not know me. I am about to go out with a heavy heart, because my appearing this evening will stop any absurd story which the event of the day might give rise to. Do you think *now* I am *cold* and *stern* and *artful*? Will even *others* think so? Will your *mother* ever—that mother to whom we must indeed sacrifice much, more, much more on my part than she shall ever know or can imagine? "Promise not to love you!" ah, Caroline, it is past promising. But I shall attribute all concessions to the proper motive, and never cease to feel all that you have already witnessed, and more than can ever be known but to my own heart,—perhaps to yours. May God protect, forgive, and bless you. Ever, and even more than ever,

Your most attached,

BYRON.

P.S.—These taunts which have driven you to this, my dearest Caroline, were it not for your mother and the kindness of your connections, is there anything on earth or heaven that would have made me so happy as to have made you mine long ago? and not less *now* than *then*, but *more* than ever at this time. You know I would with pleasure give up all here and all beyond the grave for you, and in refraining from this, must my motives be misunderstood? I care not who knows this, what use is made of it,—it is to *you* and to *you* only that they are *yourself* (*sic*). I was and am yours freely and most entirely, to obey, to honour, love,—and fly with you when, where, and how you yourself *might* and *may* determine.

Lady Melbourne, to whom the next letter is written, was the mother-in-law of Lady Caroline

Lamb, and an aunt of Miss Milbanke, the future Lady Byron. She was one of the cleverest and most beautiful women of her day. Reynolds painted her in his well-known picture "Maternal Affection." Byron spoke of her as "the best, the kindest, and ablest woman I have ever known, old or young." He thus described her to Lady Blessington :

"Lady M., who might have been my mother, excited an interest in my feelings that few young women have been able to awaken. She was a charming person—a sort of modern Aspasia, uniting the energy of a man's mind with the delicacy and tenderness of a woman's. She wrote and spoke admirably, because she felt admirably. Envy, malice, hatred, or uncharitableness, found no place in her feelings. She had all of philosophy, save its moroseness, and all of nature, save its defects and general *faiblesse* ; or if some portion of *faiblesse* attached to her, it only served to render her more forbearing to the errors of others. I have often thought, that, with a little more youth, Lady M. might have turned my head, at all events she often turned my heart, by bringing me back to mild feelings, when the demon passion was strong within me. Her mind and heart were as fresh as if only sixteen summers had flown over her, instead of four times that number."

33. *To Lady Melbourne*

CHELTENHAM, September 10, 1812.

DEAR LADY MELBOURNE,—I presume you have heard and will not be sorry to hear *again* that

they are safely deposited in Ireland,¹ and that the sea rolls between you and *one* of your torments ; the other you see is still at your elbow. Now (if you are as sincere as I sometimes almost dream) you will not regret to hear, that I wish this to end, and it certainly shall not be renewed on my part. It is not that I love another, but loving at all is quite out of my way ; I am tired of being a fool, and when I look back on the waste of time, and the destruction of all my plans last winter by this last romance, I am—what I ought to have been long ago. It is true from early habit, one must make love mechanically, as one swims. I was once very fond of both, but now as I never swim, unless I tumble into the water, I don't make love till almost obliged, though I fear *that* is not the shortest way out of the troubled waves with which in such accidents we must struggle.

But I will say no more on this topic, as I am not sure of my ground, and you can easily outwit me, as you always hitherto have done.

To-day I have had a letter from Lord Holland, wishing me to write for the opening theatre,² but as all Grub Street seems engaged in the contest, I have no ambition to enter the lists, and have thrown my few ideas into the fire. I never risk *rivalry* in anything, you see the very *lowest*, as in this case, discourages me, from a sort of mixed feeling, I don't know if it be *pride*, but *you* will say it certainly is not *modesty*. I suppose your friend Twiss will be *one*.³ I hear there are five hundred, and I wish him success. I really think he would do it well, but few men who have any

¹ Lady Caroline Lamb and her mother, Lady Bessborough.

² Drury Lane.

³ Horace Twiss, a wit and politician.

character to lose, would risk it in an anonymous scramble, for the sake of their own feelings.

I have written to Lord H. to thank him and decline the chance.

Betty¹ is performing here, I fear very ill. His figure is that of a hippopotamus, his face like the bull and mouth on the panels of a heavy coach, his arms like fins fattened out of shape, his voice the gargling of an alderman with the quinsy, and his acting altogether ought to be natural, for it certainly is like nothing that *Art* has ever yet exhibited on the stage.

Will you honour me with a line at your leisure ? On the most *indifferent* subjects you please and believe me ever,

Yours very affectionately,

B.

34. *To the Hon. Augusta Leigh*

4, BENNET STREET, ST. JAMES'S,
March 26th, 1813.

MY DEAREST AUGUSTA,—I did not answer your letter, because I could not answer as I wished, but expected that every week would bring me some tidings that might enable me to reply better than by apologies. But Claughton² has not, will not, and, I think, cannot pay his money, and though, luckily, it was stipulated that he should never have possession till the whole was paid, the estate is still on my hands, and your brother consequently not less embarrassed than ever. This is the truth, and is all the excuse I can offer for inability, but not unwillingness, to serve you.

I am going abroad again in June, but should

¹ An actor.

² Newstead was sold to a Mr. Claughton, who found himself unable to complete the purchase, and forfeited £25,000 on the contract. It was eventually sold in 1817 for £94,500.

wish to see you before my departure. You have perhaps heard that I have been fooling away my time with different "*regnantes* ;" but what better can be expected from me? I have but one *relative*, and her I never see. I have no connections to domesticate with, and for marriage I have neither the talent nor the inclination. I cannot fortune-hunt, nor afford to marry without a fortune. My parliamentary schemes are not much to my taste—I spoke twice last Session, and was told it was well enough ; but I hate the thing altogether, and have no intention to "strut another hour"¹ on that stage. I am thus wasting the best part of life, daily repenting and never amending.

On Sunday, I set off for a fortnight for Eywood, near Presteign, in Herefordshire—with the *Oxfords*.² I see you put on a *demure* look at the name, which is very becoming and matronly in you ; but you won't be sorry to hear that I am quite out of a more serious scrape with another singular personage³ which threatened me last year,

¹ Cf. *Hamlet*, V, v, 25.

² Of Lady Oxford (who was painted by Hoppner) Byron said : "There was a lady at that time, double my own age, the mother of several children who were perfect angels, with whom I had formed a *liaison* that continued without interruption for eight months. The autumn of a beauty like her's is preferable to the spring in others. She told me she was never in love till she was thirty ; and I thought myself so with her when she was forty. I never felt a stronger passion ; which she returned with equal ardour. She had been sacrificed, almost before she was a woman, to one whose mind and body were equally contemptible in the scale of creation. Strange as it may seem, she gained (as all women do) an influence over me so strong, that I had great difficulty in breaking with her, even when I knew she had been inconstant to me ; and once was on the point of going abroad with her, and narrowly escaped this folly."

³ Lady Frances Wedderburn Webster.

and trouble enough I had to steer clear of it I assure you. I hope all my nieces are well, and increasing in growth and number; but I wish you were not always buried in that bleak common near Newmarket.

I am very well in health, but not happy, nor even comfortable; but I will not bore you with complaints. I am a fool, and deserve all the ills I have met, or may meet with, but nevertheless very *sensibly*, dearest Augusta,

Your most affectionate brother, BYRON.

35. To Thomas Moore

BENNET STREET, August 22, 1813.

As our late—I might say, deceased—correspondence had too much of the town-life leaven in it, we will now, *paulo majora*, prattle a little of literature in all its branches; and first of the first—criticism. The Prince is at Brighton, and Jackson, the boxer, gone to Margate, having, I believe, decoyed Yarmouth¹ to see a milling in that polite neighbourhood. Made. de Stael Holstein has lost one of her young barons,² who has been carbonadoed by a vile Teutonic adjutant,—kilt and killed in a coffee-house at Scrawsenhawsen. Corinne is, of course, what all mothers must be,—but will, I venture to prophesy, do what few mothers could—write an Essay upon it. She cannot exist without a grievance—and somebody to see, or read, how much grief becomes her. I have not seen her since the event; but

¹ Earl of Yarmouth, afterwards Marquis of Hertford. He was the prototype of Monmouth in *Coningsby* and of Steyne in *Vanity Fair*.

² Albert de Staël.

merely judge (not very charitably) from prior observation.

In a "mail-coach copy"¹ of the *Edinburgh*, I perceive *The Giaour* is second article. The numbers are still in the Leith smack—*pray which way is the wind?* The said article is so very mild and sentimental, that it must be written by Jeffrey *in love*; ²—you know he is gone to America to marry some fair one, of whom he has been, for several *quarters*, *éperdument amoureux*. Seriously—as Winifred Jenkins says of Lismahago ³—Mr. Jeffrey (or his deputy) "has done the handsome "thing by me," and I say *nothing*. But this I will say, if you and I had knocked one another on the head in this quarrel, how he would have laughed, and what a mighty bad figure we should have cut in our posthumous works. By the by, I was call'd *in* the other day to mediate between two gentlemen bent upon carnage,⁴ and—after a long struggle between the natural desire of destroying one's fellow-creatures, and the dislike of seeing

¹ Only special copies of books published in Edinburgh came to London by coach; the bulk was forwarded in Leith smacks.

² Francis Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*. Byron, believing him to have been the author of the criticism of *Hours of Idleness* (which has been attributed both to him and Brougham), attacked him in *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*, but afterwards wrote appreciatively of him in *Don Juan*:—

"And all our little feuds, at least all *mine*,
 Dear Jeffrey, once my most redoubted foe
 (As far as rhyme and criticism combine
 To make such puppets of us things below),
 Are over; Here's a health to 'Auld Lang Syne!'
 I do not know you, and may never know
 Your face—but you have acted, on the whole,
 Most nobly; and I own it from my soul."

³ Winifred Jenkins is the maid to Miss Tabitha Bramble, who marries Captain Lismahago, in Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker*.

⁴ Lord Foley and Scrope Davies.

men play the fool for nothing,—I got one to make an apology, and the other to take it, and left them to live happy ever after. One was a peer, the other a friend untitled, and both fond of high play ;—and one, I can swear for, though very mild, “not fearful,”¹ and so dead a shot, that, though the other is the thinnest of men, he would have split him like a cane. They both conducted themselves very well, and I put them out of *pain* as soon as I could.

There is an American *Life* of G. F. Cooke,² *Scurra* deceased, lately published. Such a book !—I believe, since *Drunken Barnaby's Journal*,³ nothing like it has drenched the press. All green-room and tap-room—drams and the drama—brandy, whisky-punch, and, *latterly*, toddy, overflow every page. Two things are rather marvellous,—first, that a man should live so long drunk, and, next, that he should have found a sober biographer. There are some very laughable things in it, nevertheless ;—but the pints he swallowed, and the parts he performed, are too regularly registered.

All this time you wonder I am not gone ; so do I ; but the accounts of the plague are very perplexing—not so much for the thing itself as the quarantine established in all ports, and from all places, even from England. It is true the forty or sixty days would, in all probability, be as foolishly spent on shore as in the ship ; but one

¹ *The Tempest*, I, ii, 468.

² A well-known actor (1755–1812). *Scurra*, which generally means a “parasite,” is used here in its other sense of “buffoon.” *Memoirs of George Frederic Cooke*, by W. Dunlap, was published in 1813.

³ Printed about 1650. It has been ascribed to Barnaby Harrington and also to Richard Brathwait.

likes to have one's choice, nevertheless. Town is awfully empty; but not the worse for that. I am really puzzled with my perfect ignorance of what I mean to do;—not stay, if I can help it, but where to go? Sligo¹ is for the North;—a pleasant place, Petersburg, in September, with one's ears and nose in a muff, or else tumbling into one's neckcloth or pocket-handkerchief! If the winter treated Buonaparte with so little ceremony, what would it inflict upon your solitary traveller?—Give me a *sun*, I care not how hot, and sherbet, I care not how cool, and *my* Heaven is as easily made as your Persian's.² *The Giaour* is now a thousand and odd lines. "Lord Fanny spins a thousand such a day,"³ eh, Moore?—thou wilt needs be a wag, but I forgive it.

Yours ever,

BYRON.

P.S.—I perceive I have written a flippant and rather cold-hearted letter! let it go, however. I have said nothing, either, of the brilliant sex; but the fact is, I am at this moment in a far more serious, and entirely new, scrape⁴ than any of the last twelve months,—and that is saying a good deal. It is unlucky we can neither live with nor without these women.

I am now thinking of regretting that, just as I have left Newstead, you reside near it. Did you ever see it? *do*—but don't tell me that you like it. If I had known of such intellectual neighbourhood, I don't think I should have

¹ Lord Sligo, with whom Byron was at Athens in 1810.

² "A Persian's Heav'n is easily made—
'Tis but black eyes and lemonade."

MOORE'S *Twopenny Post-bag*.

³ Pope, *Imitations of Horace*, I, 6.

⁴ See p. 82.

quitted it. You could have come over so often, as a bachelor,—for it was a thorough bachelor's mansion—plenty of wine and such sordid sensualities—with books enough, room enough, and an air of antiquity about all (except the lasses) that would have suited you, when pensive, and served you to laugh at when in glee. I had built myself a bath and a *vault*—and now I shan't even be buried in it. It is odd that we can't even be certain of a *grave*, at least a particular one. I remember, when about fifteen, reading your poems there, which I can repeat almost now,—and asking all kinds of questions about the author, when I heard that he was not dead according to the preface; wondering if I should ever see him—and though, at that time, without the smallest poetical propensity myself, very much taken, as you may imagine, with that volume. Adieu—I commit you to the care of the gods—Hindoo, Scandinavian, and Hellenic!

P.S. 2d.—There is an excellent review of Grimm's *Correspondence* and Mad^e. de Stael in this N^o. of the *Edinburgh Review*. Jeffrey, himself, was my critic last year; but this is, I believe, by another hand. I hope you are going on with your *grand coup*—pray do—or that damned Lucien Buonaparte will beat us all. I have seen much of his poem¹ in MS., and he really surpasses every thing beneath Tasso. Hodgson is translating him *against* another bard. You and (I believe Rogers,) Scott, Gifford, and myself, are to be referred to as judges between the twain,—that is, if you accept the office. Conceive our different opinions! I think we, most of us (I am talking very impudently, you will think—*us*,

¹ Charlemagne.

indeed !) have a way of our own,—at least, you and Scott certainly have.

EXTRACTS FROM A JOURNAL

(1813-1814)

[Nov. 14, 1813.]

If this had been begun ten years ago, and faithfully kept!!!—heighho! there are too many things I wish never to have remembered, as it is. Well,—I have had my share of what are called the pleasures of this life, and have seen more of the European and Asiatic world than I have made a good use of. They say "Virtue is "its own reward,"—it certainly should be paid well for its trouble. At five-and-twenty, when the better part of life is over, one should be *something*;—and what am I? nothing but five-and-twenty—and the odd months. What have I seen? the same man all over the world,—ay, and woman too. Give *me* a Mussulman who never asks questions, and a she of the same race who saves one the trouble of putting them. But for this same plague—yellow fever—and Newstead delay, I should have been by this time a second time close to the Euxine. If I can overcome the last, I don't so much mind your pestilence; and, at any rate, the spring shall see me there,—provided I neither marry myself, nor unmarry any one else in the interval. I wish one was—I don't know what I wish. It is odd I never set myself seriously to wishing without attaining it—and repenting. I begin to believe with the good old Magi, that one should only pray for the nation, and not for the individual;

—but, on my principle, this would not be very patriotic.

[Nov. 24.]

If I had any views in this country, they would probably be parliamentary. But I have no ambition ; at least, if any, it would be *aut Cæsar aut nihil*. My hopes are limited to the arrangement of my affairs, and settling either in Italy or the East (rather the last), and drinking deep of the languages and literature of both. Past events have unnerved me ; and all I can now do is to make life an amusement, and look on while others play. After all, even the highest game of crowns and sceptres, what is it ? *Vide* Napoleon's last twelvemonth. It has completely upset my system of fatalism. I thought, if crushed, he would have fallen, when *fractus illabitur orbis*,¹ and not have been pared away to gradual insignificance ; that all this was not a mere *jeu* of the gods, but a prelude to greater changes and mightier events. But men never advance beyond a certain point ; and here we are, retrograding, to the dull, stupid old system,—balance of Europe—poising straws upon king's noses, instead of wringing them off ! Give me a republic, or a despotism of one, rather than the mixed government of one, two, three. A republic !—look in the history of the Earth—Rome, Greece, Venice, France, Holland, America, our short (*eheu !*) Commonwealth, and compare it with what they did under masters. The Asiatics are not qualified to be republicans, but they have the liberty of demolishing despots, which is the next thing to it. To be the first man—not the

¹ Horace, *Odes*, III, iii, 7.

Dictator—not the Sylla, but the Washington or the Aristides—the leader in talent and truth—is next to the Divinity! Franklin, Penn, and, next to these, either Brutus or Cassius—even Mirabeau—or St. Just. I shall never be any thing, or rather always be nothing. The most I can hope is, that some will say, "He might, perhaps, if he would."

12, midnight.

I have been thinking lately a good deal of Mary Duff.¹ How very odd that I should have been so utterly, devotedly fond of that girl, at an age when I could neither feel passion, nor know the meaning of the word. And the effect! My mother used always to rally me about this childish amour; and, at last, many years after, when I was sixteen, she told me one day, "Oh, Byron, I have had a letter from Edinburgh, from Miss Abercromby, and your old sweet-heart Mary Duff is married to a Mr. Coe." And what was my answer? I really cannot explain or account for my feelings at that moment; but they nearly threw me into convulsions, and alarmed my mother so much, that after I grew better, she generally avoided the subject—to *me*—and contented herself with telling it to all her acquaintance. Now, what could this be? I had never seen her since her mother's *faux pas* at Aberdeen had been the cause of her removal to her grandmother's at Banff; we were both

¹ His distant cousin, who lived at Aberdeen in Byron's childhood. Byron told Pryse Gordon that some of the first verses he ever wrote were in praise of her beauty. She married a wine merchant of Edinburgh and London.

the merest children. I had and have been attached fifty times since that period; yet I recollect all we said to each other, all our caresses, her features, my restlessness, sleeplessness, my tormenting my mother's maid to write for me to her, which she at last did, to quiet me. Poor Nancy thought I was wild, and, as I could not write for myself, became my secretary. I remember, too, our walks, and the happiness of sitting by Mary, in the children's apartment, at their house not far from the Plain-stanes at Aberdeen, while her lesser sister Helen played with the doll, and we sat gravely making love, in our way.

How the deuce did all this occur so early? where could it originate? I certainly had no sexual ideas for years afterwards; and yet my misery, my love for that girl were so violent, that I sometimes doubt if I have ever been really attached since. Be that as it may, hearing of her marriage several years after was like a thunder-stroke—it nearly choked me—to the horror of my mother and the astonishment and almost incredulity of every body. And it is a phenomenon in my existence (for I was not eight years old) which has puzzled, and will puzzle me to the latest hour of it; and lately, I know not why, the *recollection* (*not* the attachment) has recurred as forcibly as ever. I wonder if she can have the least remembrance of it or me? or remember pitying her sister Helen for not having an admirer too? How very pretty is the perfect image of her in my memory—her brown, dark hair, and hazel eyes; her very dress! I should be quite grieved to see *her now*; the reality, however beautiful, would destroy, or at least

confuse, the features of the lovely Peri which then existed in her, and still lives in my imagination, at the distance of more than sixteen years.

.

[Nov. 27.]

All are inclined to believe what they covet, from a lottery-ticket up to a passport to Paradise,—in which, from the description, I see nothing very tempting. My restlessness tells me I have something "within that passeth show."¹ It is for Him, who made it, to prolong that spark of celestial fire which illuminates, yet burns, this frail tenement; but I see no such horror in a "dreamless sleep," and I have no conception of any existence which duration would not render tiresome. How else "fell the angels,"² even according to your creed? They were immortal, heavenly, and happy, as their *apostate Abdiel*³ is now by his treachery. Time must decide; and eternity won't be the less agreeable or more horrible because one did not expect it. In the mean time, I am grateful for some good, and tolerably patient under certain evils—*grace à Dieu et mon bien tempérament*.

.

Yesterday, a very pretty letter from Annabella,⁴ which I answered. What an odd situation and friendship is ours!—without one spark of love on either side, and produced by circumstances which in general lead to coldness on one side, and aversion on the other. She is a very superior

¹ *Hamlet*, I, ii, 85.

² *Henry VIII*, III, ii, 442.

³ *Paradise Lost*, v, 896.

⁴ Miss Milbanke.

woman, and very little spoiled, which is strange in an heiress—a girl of twenty—a peeress that is to be, in her own right—an only child, and a *savante*, who has always had her own way. She is a poetess—a mathematician—a metaphysician, and yet, withal, very kind, generous, and gentle, with very little pretension. Any other head would be turned with half her acquisitions, and a tenth of her advantages.

.

[Dec. 1.]

To-day responded to La Baronne de Stael Holstein, and sent to Leigh Hunt (an acquisition to my acquaintance—through Moore—of last summer) a copy of the two Turkish tales. Hunt is an extraordinary character, and not exactly of the present age. He reminds me more of the Pym and Hampden times—much talent, great independence of spirit, and an austere, yet not repulsive, aspect. If he goes on *qualis ab incepto*, I know few men who will deserve more praise or obtain it. I must go and see him again ;—the rapid succession of adventure, since last summer, added to some serious uneasiness and business, have interrupted our acquaintance ; but he is a man worth knowing ; and though, for his own sake, I wish him out of prison, I like to study character in such situations. He has been unshaken, and will continue so. I don't think him deeply versed in life ;—he is the bigot of virtue (not religion), and enamoured of the beauty of that "empty name," as the last breath of Brutus pronounced, and every day proves it. He is, perhaps, a little opinionated, as all men who are the *centre of circles*, wide or narrow—the

Sir Oracles, in whose name two or three are gathered together—must be, and as even Johnson was ; but, withal, a valuable man, and less vain than success and even the consciousness of preferring "the right to the expedient" might excuse.

[Dec. 13.]

Allen¹ (Lord Holland's Allen—the best informed and one of the ablest men I know—a perfect Magliabecchi²—a devourer, a *Helluo*³ of books, and an observer of men,) has lent me a quantity of Burns's unpublished and never-to-be-published Letters. They are full of oaths and obscene songs. What an antithetical mind!—tenderness, roughness—delicacy, coarseness—sentiment, sensuality—soaring and grovelling, dirt and deity—all mixed up in that one compound of inspired clay !

It seems strange ; a true voluptuary will never abandon his mind to the grossness of reality. It is by exalting the earthly, the material, the *physique* of our pleasures, by veiling these ideas, by forgetting them altogether, or, at least, never naming them hardly to one's self, that we alone can prevent them from disgusting.

December 14, 15, 16.

Much done, but nothing to record. It is quite enough to set down my thoughts,—my actions will rarely bear retrospection.

¹ John Allen, who accompanied Lord Holland to Spain as Librarian, and lived with him at Holland House. He was afterwards Master of Dulwich College. He wrote *Inquiry into the Rise and Growth of the Royal Prerogative in England*, and many other works.

² Antonio Magliabecchi (1633-1714), Librarian to the Grand-Duke of Tuscany.

³ Gormandizer.

December 17, 18.

Lord Holland told me a curious piece of sentimentality in Sheridan. The other night we were all delivering our respective and various opinions on him and other *hommes marquans*, and mine was this:—"Whatever Sheridan has done or chosen to do has been, *par excellence*, always the best of its kind. He has written the best comedy (*School for Scandal*), the best drama (in my mind, far before that St. Giles's lampoon, the *Beggar's Opera*), the best farce (the *Critic*—it is only too good for a farce), and the best Address (Monologue on Garrick), and, to crown all, delivered the very best Oration (the famous Begum Speech) ever conceived or heard in this country." Somebody told S. this the next day, and on hearing it he burst into tears!

Poor Brinsley! if they were tears of pleasure, I would rather have said these few, but most sincere words than have written the Iliad or made his own celebrated Philippic. Nay, his own comedy never gratified me more than to hear that he had derived a moment's gratification from any praise of mine, humble as it must appear to "my elders and my betters."¹

Redde some Italian, and wrote two Sonnets on * * *. I never wrote but one sonnet before, and that was not in earnest, and many years ago, as an exercise—and I will never write another. They are the most puling, petrifying, stupidly platonic compositions. I detest the Petrarch so much, that I would not be the man even to have

¹ Apparently a faulty recollection of "to all my betters" of the Prayer Book Catechism.

obtained his Laura, which the metaphysical, whining dotard never could.

.

W.¹ is in sad enmity with the Whigs about this Review of Fox (if he *did* review him);—all the epigrammatists and essayists are at him. I hate *odds*, and wish he may beat them. As for me, by the blessing of indifference, I have simplified my politics into an utter detestation of all existing governments; and, as it is the shortest and most agreeable and summary feeling imaginable, the first moment of an universal republic would convert me into an advocate for single and uncontradicted despotism. The fact is, riches are power, and poverty is slavery all over the earth, and one sort of establishment is no better nor worse for a *people* than another. I shall adhere to my party, because it would not be honourable to act otherwise; but, as to *opinions*, I don't think politics *worth* an *opinion*. *Conduct* is another thing;—if you begin with a party, go on with them. I have no consistency, except in politics; and *that* probably arises from my indifference on the subject altogether.

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[Feb. 18, 1814.] Midnight.

Began a letter, which I threw into the fire. Redde—but to little purpose. Did not visit Hobhouse, as I promised and ought. No matter, the loss is mine. Smoked cigars.

Napoleon!—this week will decide his fate. All seems against him; but I believe and hope he

¹ The Hon. John William Ward, afterwards Earl of Dudley. He wrote an article in the *Quarterly Review* on *The Correspondence of Gilbert Wakefield with Mr. Fox*.

will win—at least, beat back the invaders. What right have we to prescribe sovereigns to France? Oh for a Republic! “Brutus, thou sleepest,”¹ Hobhouse abounds in continental anecdotes of this extraordinary man; all in favour of his intellect and courage, but against his *bonhommie*. No wonder;—how should he, who knows mankind well, do other than despise and abhor them?

The greater the equality, the more impartially evil is distributed, and becomes lighter by the division among so many—therefore, a Republic!

More notes from Madame de Stael unanswered—and so they shall remain. I admire her abilities, but really her society is overwhelming—an avalanche that buries one in glittering nonsense—all snow and sophistry.

Shall I go to Mackintosh’s² on Tuesday? um! I did not go to Marquis Lansdowne’s nor to Miss Berry’s,³ though both are pleasant. So is Sir James’s,—but I don’t know—I believe one is not the better for parties; at least, unless some *regnante* is there.

I wonder how the deuce any body could make such a world; for what purpose dandies, for instance, were ordained—and kings—and fellows of colleges—and women of “a certain age”—and many men of any age—and myself, most of all!

.
Saturday, April 9, 1814.

I mark this day!

Napoleon Buonaparte has abdicated the throne of the world. “Excellent well.” Methinks Sylla

¹ *Julius Cæsar*, II, i, 46.

² Sir James Mackintosh, the philosopher.

³ Mary Berry, authoress, the friend of Horace Walpole, and famous for her *Journals and Correspondence*.

did better ; for he revenged and resigned in the height of his sway, red with the slaughter of his foes—the finest instance of glorious contempt of the rascals upon record. Dioclesian did well too—Amurath not amiss, had he become aught except a dervise—Charles the Fifth but so so—but Napoleon, worst of all. What ! wait till they were in his capital, and then talk of his readiness to give up what is already gone !! "What whining monk art thou—what holy cheat ?"¹ 'Sdeath !—Dionysius at Corinth was yet a king to this. The "Isle of Elba" to retire to !—Well—if it had been Caprea, I should have marvelled less. "I see men's minds are "but a parcel of their fortunes."² I am utterly bewildered and confounded.

I don't know—but I think *I*, even *I* (an insect compared with this creature), have set my life on casts not a millionth part of this man's. But, after all, a crown may be not worth dying for. Yet, to outlive *Lodi* for this !!! Oh that Juvenal or Johnson could rise from the dead ! *Expende—quot libras in duce summo invenies ?*³ I knew they were light in the balance of mortality ; but I thought their living dust weighed more *carats*. Alas ! this imperial diamond hath a flaw in it, and is now hardly fit to stick in a glazier's pencil :—the pen of the historian won't rate it worth a ducat.

Psha ! "something too much of this."⁴ But I won't give him up even now ; though all his

¹ Otway, *Venice Preserved*.

² *Antony and Cleopatra*, III, xi, 31.

³ Juvenal, *Sat.* x, 147. Translated by Gifford—

"Produce the urn that Hannibal contains,
And weigh the mighty dust which yet remains :
And is this all ?"

⁴ *Hamlet*, III, ii, 74.

admirers have, "like the thanes, fallen from him."¹

April 10.

I do not know that I am happiest when alone, but this I am sure of, that I never am long in the society even of *her* I love, (God knows too well, and the devil probably too,) without a yearning for the company of my lamp and my utterly confused and tumbled-over library. Even in the day, I send away my carriage oftener than I use or abuse it. *Per esempio*,—I have not stirred out of these rooms for these four days past, but I have sparred for exercise (windows open) with Jackson an hour daily, to attenuate and keep up the ethereal part of me. The more violent the fatigue, the better my spirits for the rest of the day; and then, my evenings have that calm nothingness of languor, which I most delight in. To-day I have boxed an hour—written an ode to Napoleon Buonaparte—copied it—eaten six biscuits—drunk four bottles of soda water²—redde away the rest of my time—besides giving poor Webster a world of advice about this mistress of his, who

¹ *Macbeth*, V, iii, 49.

² Lord Ernle (*Letters and Journals*, Vol. II, p. 411) prints a receipted bill of Byron for twenty-two dozen bottles of soda-water supplied between Oct. 4 and Dec. 22, 1814. Byron was very ascetic in eating and drinking—though Hobhouse said that he sometimes made an affectation of this in the presence of strangers. Samuel Rogers has left an account of his first meeting with Byron (see p. 66). "When we sat down to dinner, I asked 'Byron if he would take soup? 'No; he never took soup.' 'Would he take some fish? 'No; he never took fish.' Presently I asked if he would eat some mutton. 'No; he never ate mutton.' I then asked if he would take a glass of wine. 'No; he never tasted wine.' It was now necessary to inquire 'what he *did* eat and drink; and the answer was, 'Nothing but 'hard biscuits and soda-water.' Unfortunately, neither hard 'biscuits nor soda-water were at hand; and he dined upon

is plaguing him into a phthisic and intolerable tediousness. I am a pretty fellow truly to lecture about "the sect." No matter, my counsels are all thrown away.

April 19, 1814.

There is ice at both poles, north and south—all extremes are the same—misery belongs to the highest and the lowest only, to the emperor and the beggar, when unsixpenced and unthroned. There is, to be sure, a damned insipid medium—an equinoctial line—no one knows where, except upon maps and measurement.

"And all our *yesterdays* have lighted fools
The way to dusty death."¹

I will keep no further journal of that same hesternal torch-light; and, to prevent me from returning, like a dog, to the vomit of memory, I tear out the remaining leaves of this volume, and write, in *Ipecacuanha*,—"that the Bourbons are "restored!!!"—"Hang up philosophy."² To be sure, I have long despised myself and man, but I never spat in the face of my species before—"O fool! I shall go mad."³

"potatoes bruised down on his plate and drenched with vinegar." Perhaps apart from dread of growing fat, through pride in his physical beauty, he found that to exceed a certain weight aggravated the inconvenience caused by his lameness. On the other hand, he could drink wine with enjoyment if he wanted to. In *Detached Thoughts* he says, of a party at Lady Jersey's in 1812: "Nobody drank, but Cheeks and I. To be sure, there was little occasion, for we swept off what was on the table very sufficiently. However, we carried our liquor discreetly, like 'the Baron of Bradwardine.' Cheeks, who loves his bottle, and had no notion of meeting with a 'bon vivant' in a scribbler, in making my eulogy to somebody one evening summed it up in, 'By G—d, he drinks like a man!'"

¹ *Macbeth*, V, v, 22-3.

² *Romeo and Juliet*, III, iii, 56. .

³ *King Lear*, II, iv, 286.

IV

COURTSHIP, MARRIAGE, SEPARATION

(1813-1816)

THE letters included in this section cover two years and eight months, from the continuation of Byron's correspondence with Miss Milbanke after her refusal of his first proposal (in 1812), to his second proposal and its acceptance; his marriage; the birth of a child; Lady Byron's refusal to continue to live with her husband; the signing of a separation deed; the explosion of public indignation against Byron; and Byron's departure from England, to which he was destined never to return.

During the period Byron published the *Bride of Abydos*, the *Corsair*, *Lara*, *Hebrew Melodies*, the *Siege of Corinth*, and *Parisina*. In spite of the success of his writings he was in money difficulties. Marriage had increased his expenses; creditors dunned the husband of an heiress; there were nine executions in his London house within a year; and in November 1815 he had to sell his library.

The exact cause of Lady Byron's separation from her husband remains a mystery. The bare facts are these: The wedding was on January 2, 1815, and Byron and his wife settled in London in Piccadilly Terrace. On December 10 of the same year Lady Byron gave birth to a daughter,

Augusta Ada. A month later, January 6, 1816, it is arranged that Lady Byron shall leave London as soon as she is well enough, and stay with her parents (who, on the death of Lord Wentworth, had taken the name of Noel). On January 8 Lady Byron consults a doctor, expressing doubts about Byron's sanity. On January 15 she leaves London. On reaching her parents at Kirkby Malory on January 16 she writes to her husband in affectionate terms a letter beginning "Dearest Duck" and signed by her pet name, "Pippin." On January 17 she and her parents are hoping that Byron will join them at Kirkby Malory, and that he will be cured of his insanity. Lady Noel consults medical and legal advisers, but no proof of insanity is found. The attitude Lady Byron now takes is that her husband has been guilty of conduct which, as he has not been found to be insane, is inexcusable, and makes it impossible to live with him. On February 2 her father puts to Byron a proposal for a separation. Byron at first rejects this. Lady Byron goes to London and consults her legal adviser, Dr. Lushington (who had previously been consulted, together with Sir Samuel Romilly, by Lady Noel). Lady Byron informs him of circumstances which he and her parents had hitherto not known. In the face of this new knowledge Dr. Lushington now considers reconciliation out of the question. A formal separation is reluctantly agreed to by Byron, and executed by deed on April 22, and on April 24 Byron leaves England, never to return, and never again to see his wife or child.

Several questions intrude themselves. What was the conduct that caused Lady Byron to suspect Byron of insanity? What were the facts, fresh to Dr. Lushington, which, after his interview with Lady Byron (but not after his earlier consultation by Lady Noel), led him to regard reconciliation as impossible, and to state that if it were proposed he could take no part, professionally or otherwise, towards effecting it? And had those fresh facts first come to Lady Byron's knowledge only after she left London on January 15?

Byron took up the line that no specific charges were ever brought against him; that the other side had been challenged by Hobhouse to come into court; that he only yielded because Lady Byron had claimed a promise that he would consent to a separation if she really desired it. Hobhouse himself also stated, later, that Byron had been ready to go into court.

On the other hand, Lady Byron writes to Hodgson (February 1816) that Byron "does know"—too well—what he affects to inquire."

Moore, who had read Byron's memoirs (destroyed after Byron's death), suggests in the *Life* that there is no mystery requiring explanation. He cites Steele's remark: "In all the marriages I have ever seen, most of which have been unhappy ones, the greatest cause of evil has proceeded from slight occasions"; and he quotes a statement of Byron a short time before his death, to someone who had enumerated the various causes he had heard alleged for the

separation: "The causes, my dear sir, were too "simple to be easily found." Moore's summing up is not much more than tantamount to the argument that there was incompatibility of temperament.

Byron described the state of feeling roused by the scandal, during what Macaulay termed "one of the British public's ridiculous "periodical fits of morality." Byron was accused of "every monstrous vice"; advised not to go to the theatre or to Parliament for fear of public insults; and his friends feared violence from the mob when he started in his travelling carriage.

In 1869—forty-five years after Byron's death, and nine years after Lady Byron's—Mrs. Beecher Stowe (the authoress of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*) published an article in *Macmillan's Magazine* in which she asserted that Lady Byron in 1856 informed her that she had accused her husband to Dr. Lushington of incest with his half-sister Augusta Leigh. This matter has been pursued further by the late Earl of Lovelace (Byron's grandson) in *Astarte* (1906; new edition, by Lady Lovelace, 1921). In 1906 Mr. (now Sir) John Murray issued a rejoinder in *Byron and his Detractors*. It remains the case that no published evidence exists to prove the precise nature of the charges on which Lady Byron separated from her husband.

36. To Miss Milbanke

4, BENNET ST. 25 Aug. 1813.

I am honored with your letter which I wish to acknowledge immediately. Before I endeavour

to answer it, allow me—briefly if possible—to advert to the circumstances which occurred last autumn. Many years had occurred since I had seen any woman with whom there appeared to me a prospect of rational happiness. I now saw but one, to whom, however, I had no pretensions—or at least too slight for even the hope of success. It was, however, said that your heart was disengaged, and it was on that ground that L^y. Melbourne undertook to ascertain how far I might be permitted to cultivate your acquaintance, on the chance (a slender one I allow) of improving it into friendship and ultimately to a still kinder sentiment. In her zeal in my behalf—friendly and pardonable as it was—she in some degree exceeded my intentions when she made the more direct proposal, which yet I do not regret, except in so far as it appeared presumptuous on my part. That this is the truth you will allow, when I tell you that it was not till lately that I mentioned to her that I thought she had unwittingly committed me a little too far in the expectation that so abrupt an overture would be received. But I stated this casually in conversation, and without the least feeling of irritation towards her or pique against yourself. Such was the result of my first and nearest approach to that altar, to which, in the state of your feelings, I should only have led another victim. When I say the first, it may perhaps appear irreconcilable with some circumstances in my life, to which I conceive you allude in part of your letter. But such is the fact. I was then too young to marry, tho' not to love; but this was the *first direct* or indirect approach ever made on my part to a permanent union with any woman, and in all

probability it will be the last. L^y. M. was perfectly correct in her statement that I preferred you to all others ; it was then the fact ; it is so still. But it was no disappointment, because it is impossible to impart one drop more to a cup which already overflows with the waters of bitterness. We do not know ourselves ; yet I do not think that my self love was much wounded by the event. On the contrary, I feel a kind of pride even in *your rejection*—more I believe than I could derive from the attachment of another, for it reminds me that I once thought myself worthy of the affection of almost the only one of your sex I ever truly respected.

To your letter—the first part surprises me—not that you should feel attachment [but that it] should be “without hope.” May you secure that hope with its object ! To the part of your letter regarding myself I could say much ; but I must be brief. If you hear of me, it is probably not untrue, though perhaps exaggerated. On any point in which you may honor me with an interest, I shall be glad to satisfy you—to confess the truth, or refute the calumny.

I must be candid with you on the score of friendship. It is a feeling towards you with which I cannot trust myself. I doubt whether I could help loving you ; but I trust I may appeal to my conduct since our *éclaircissement* for the proof that, whatever my feelings may be, they will exempt you from persecution ; but I cannot yet profess indifference, and I fear that won't be the first step—at least in some points—from what I feel to that which you wish me to feel.

You must pardon me and recollect that, if any

thing displeases you in this letter, it is a difficult task for me to write to you at all. I have left many things unsaid, and have said others I did not mean to utter. My intended departure from this country is a little retarded by accounts of Plague, etc., etc., and I must bend my course to some more accessible region—probably to Russia. I have only left myself space to sign myself,

Ever your obliged servant,

BYRON.

37. *To Miss Milbanke*

Sept^r. 26, 1813.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—for such you will permit me to call you—On my return to town I find some consolation for having left a number of pleasant people in your letter—the more so as I begun to doubt if I should ever receive another. You ask me some questions, and as they are about myself, you must pardon the egotism into which my answers must betray me. I am glad that you know any “good deed” that I am supposed ever to have blundered upon, simply because it proves that you have not heard me invariably ill spoken of. If true I am sufficiently rewarded by a short step towards your good opinion. You don’t like my “restless” doctrines—I should be very sorry if you did; but I can’t stagnate nevertheless. If I must sail let it be on the ocean no matter how stormy—any thing but a dull cruise on a land lake without ever losing sight of the same insipid shores by which it is surrounded.

“Gay” but not “content”—very true. You say I never attempt to justify myself. You are

right. At times I can't and occasionally I won't defend by explanation ; life is not worth having on such terms. The only attempt I ever made at defence was in a poetical point of view—and what did it end in ? not an exculpation of me, but an attack on all other persons whatsoever. I should make a pretty scene indeed if I went on defending—besides, by proving myself (supposing it possible) a good sort of quiet country gentleman, to how many people should I give more pain than pleasure ? Do you think accusers like one the better for being confuted ? You have detected a laughter “false to the heart” —allowed—yet I have been tolerably sincere with you and I fear sometimes troublesome. To the charge of pride I suspect I must plead guilty, because when a boy and a very young one it was the constant reproach of schoolfellows and tutors. Since I grew up I have heard less about it—probably because I have now neither school-fellow nor tutor. It was however originally defensive—for at that time my hand like Ishmael's was against every one's and every one's against mine. I now come to a subject of your inquiry which you must have perceived I always hitherto avoided—an awful one—“Religion.” I was bred in Scotland among Calvinists in the first part of my life which gave me a dislike to that persuasion. Since that period I have visited the most bigotted and credulous of countries—Spain, Greece, Turkey. As a spectacle the Catholic is more fascinating than the Greek or the Moslem ; but the last is the only believer who practises the precepts of his Prophet to the last chapter of his creed. My opinions are quite undecided. I may say so sincerely, since, when

given over at Patras in 1810, I rejected and ejected three Priest-loads of spiritual consolation by threatening to turn Mussulman if they did not leave me in quiet. I was in great pain and looked upon death as in that respect a relief—without much regret for the past, and few speculations on the future. Indeed so indifferent was I to my bodily situation, that, tho' I was without any attendant but a young Frenchman as ill as myself, two barbarous Arnouts, and a deaf and desperate Greek Quack—and my English servant (a man with me) within two days journey—I would not allow the last to be sent for—worth all the rest as he would have been in attendance at such a time, because—I really don't know why—unless it was an indifference to which I am certainly not subject when in good health. I believe doubtless in God, and should be happy to be convinced of much more. If I do not at present place implicit faith in tradition and revelation of any human creed, I hope it is not from want of reverence for the Creator but the created, and when I see a man publishing a pamphlet to prove that Mr. Pitt is risen from the dead (as was done a week ago), perfectly positive in the truth of his assertion, I must be permitted to doubt more miracles equally well attested; but the moral of Christianity is perfectly beautiful—and the very sublime of virtue—yet even there we find some of its finer precepts in the earlier axioms of the Greeks—particularly “do unto others as you would they should do unto you”—the forgiveness of injuries and more which I do not remember. Good night; I have sent you a long prose. I hope your answer will be equal in length—I am sure it will be more amusing—You write

remarkably well—which you won't like to hear, so I shall say no more about it.

Ever yours most sincerely,

BYRON.

P.S.—I shall post-scribble this half sheet. When at Aston I sent you a short note for I began to feel a little nervous about the reception of my last letter. I shall be down there again next week and merely left to escape from the Doncaster Races—being very ill adapted for provincial festivities—but I shall rejoin the party when they are over. This letter was written last night after a two days journey with little rest and no refreshment (for eating on the road throws me into a fever directly); you will therefore not wonder if it is a meagre performance. When you honour me with an answer, address to London. Present my invariable respects to Sir R. and L^y Mil. and once more receive them for yourself. Good morning.

38. *To Miss Milbanke*

29th Nov^r. 1813.

No one can assume or presume less than you do, tho' very few with whom I am acquainted possess half your claims to that "superiority" which you are so fearful of affecting. Nor can I recollect any expression since the commencement of our correspondence, which has in any respect diminished my opinion of your talents,—my respect for your virtues. You wrong yourself very much in supposing that "the charm" has been broken by our nearer acquaintance. On the contrary, that very intercourse convinces me of the value of what I have lost, or rather

never found. But I will not deny that circumstances have occurred to render it more supportable.

You will think me very capricious and apt at sudden fancies. It is true I could not exist without some object of attachment, but I have shown that I am not quite a slave to impulse. . . . But however weak (or it may merit a harsher term) I may be in my disposition to attach myself (and as society is now much the same in this as in all other European countries it were difficult to avoid it), in my search for the "ideal,"—the being to whom I would commit the whole happiness of my future life,—I have never yet seen but two approaching to the likeness. The first I was too young to have a prospect of obtaining, and subsequent events have proved that my expectations might not have been fulfilled, had I ever proposed to and received my idol. *The second*—the only woman to whom I ever seriously pretended as a wife—had disposed of her heart already, and I think it too late to look for a third. I shall take the world as I find it, and have seen it much the same in most climates. (More fiery in the East—a mixture of languid habits and stormy passions.) But I have no confidence, and look for no constancy, in affections founded on caprice, and lucky conformity of disposition without any fixed principles. How far this may be my case at present, I know not, and have not had time to ascertain.

I have been scribbling another poem, as it is called—Turkish as before—for I can't empty my head of the East—and horrible enough, tho' not so sombre quite as the *Giaour* (that unpronounceable name), and for the sake of intelligibility it

is not a fragment. The scene is in the Hellespont—a favorite *séjour* of mine, and, if you will accept it, I will send you a copy; there are some Mussulman words in it which I inflict upon you in revenge for your “Mathematical and other superiority.”

When shall we meet in town? by the bye you won't take fright when we meet, will you? and imagine I am about to add to your thousand and one pretendants? I have taken exquisite care to prevent the possibility of that, tho' less likely than ever to become a Benedick. Indeed I have not seen (with one exception) for many years a Beatrice, and she will not be troubled to assume the part. I think we understand each other perfectly and may talk to each other occasionally without exciting speculation. The worst that can be said is that I *would* and you *won't*, and in this respect you can hardly be the sufferer and I am very sure I *shan't*. If I find my heart less philosophic on the subject than I at present believe it, I shall keep out of the way; but I now think it is well shielded—at least it has got a new suit of armour—and certainly it stood in need of it.

I have heard a rumour of another added to your list of unacceptables, and I am sorry for him, as I know that he has talent, and his pedigree assures him wit and good humour. You make sad havoc among “us youth.” It is lucky that Mad. de Stael has published her anti-suicide at so killing a time—November too! I have not read it for fear the love of contradiction might lead me to a practical confutation. Do you know her? I don't ask if you have heard her?—her tongue is the perpetual motion.

39. *To Lady Melbourne*

January 15, 1814.

MY DEAR L^y M^e,—As I shall not leave town till Monday, I have time to hear once by return of post, if convenient to yourself. That you may judge exactly how *Ph.*¹ and I are at present with regard to each other, I send you her last epistle ; the first part is girlish and romantic, and the whole not much to the purpose—as to the “telling,” I believe no one but yourself has any foundation but their own suspicions, and after all there is nothing to be told.

I had an odd dialogue lately with *Ph.*'s sister. We were talking of passing time in the country, and I said that my usual and favourite method was to pass several hours of the day *quietly* and *alone*. “*Alone*, but not *quietly*,” she answered. “What do you mean?” “What I have said. “I have seen you, when you did not *see me*.” I asked, as you may be sure, for an explanation, which she gave me as follows: “The morning “before we all left Newstead, I had been walking “with *Ph.* in the cloisters, where I left her to go “to my room. When I got to the hall door, “which was half open, I stopped, as I am short-sighted, to look through my glass at a person “leaning alone near the fire, and whom I could “not at first distinguish—it was *you*, but I really “did not know you immediately, you were perfectly *convulsed*.” “Why did not you walk “on, and speak to me?” “Because I was “frightened, and did not know what to do ; “but I turned back to *Ph.*” “Did you men-

¹ Lady Frances Wedderburn Webster.

"tion this to her?" "No, I had reasons for keeping it to myself."

I perfectly recollect being where she describes; and some of my sensations, but I was not aware of betraying them to anyone. The hall at Newstead is in the *Abbey* part of that enormous mansion; and quite remote from any but my own rooms; and this was the last day but one we passed together. You may perhaps judge from this that I *do feel* sometimes; and that for her at that time I *did* feel enough.

You will think this *scene* a little in C.'s¹ style, but recollect, first, it is not *my* description; and secondly, it was not before five hundred people, nor was I aware that anyone had seen it at all; and that I laid no great stress on it you may suppose, by my never having told it even to you before.

So you have H.R.H.² on Tuesday. Well, I envy him his visit, and many years of his life; much more than I do his *Regency*.

It is cruel to mention Middleton,³ when I daily regret not going—how does C. go on? I do think between her *theory*, and my system of ethics, you will begin to think that our first parents had better have paused before they plucked the tree of knowledge.

Ever y^{rs} most truly,

B.

40. To Lady Melbourne

February 11, 1814.

MY DEAR LADY M.,—On my arrival in town on Wednesday, I found myself in what the learned call a dilemma, and the vulgar a scrape. Such a

¹Lady Caroline Lamb. ²The Regent. ³Lady Jersey' place.

clash of paragraphs,¹ and a conflict of newspapers, lampoons of all description, some good, and all hearty, the Regent (as reported) wroth: L^d Carlisle in a fury; the *Morning Post* in hysterics; and the *Courier* in convulsions of criticism and contention. To complete the farce, the Morning Papers this day announce the intention of some zealous Rosencrantz or Guildenstern to "play upon his pipe"² in our house of hereditaries. This last seems a little too ludicrous to be true, but, even if so—and nothing is too ridiculous for some of them to attempt—all the motions, censures, sayings, doings and ordinances of that august body, shall never make me even endeavour to explain, or soften a syllable of the twenty words which have excited, *what* I really do not yet exactly know, as the accounts are contradictory, but be it what it may, "as the wine is tapped "it shall be drunk to the lees." You tell me not to be "violent," and not to "answer." I *have not* and shall *not* answer, and although the consequences may be, for aught I know to the contrary, exclusion from society, and all sorts of disagreeables, the "*Demon* whom I still have "served, has not yet cowed my better part of "man"³; and whatever I may, and have, or shall feel, I have that within me, that bounds against opposition. I have *quick feelings*, and not very *good nerves*; but somehow they have more than

¹ With the first edition of the *Corsair* appeared the lines "Weep, daughter of a royal line"—the Princess Charlotte having wept, it was said, on the inability of the Whigs to form a cabinet on Perceval's death. The lines were the occasion of attacks on Byron by the government papers.

² *Hamlet*, III, ii, 373.

³ Cf. *Macbeth*, V, vii, 43, 47.

once served me pretty well, when I most wanted them, and may again. At any rate I shall try.

Did you ever know anything like this? At a time when peace and war, and Emperors and Napoleons, and the destinies of the things they have made of mankind, are trembling in the balance, the Government Gazettes can devote half their attention and columns, day after day, to 8 *lines*, written two years ago and now *re-published only* (by an individual), and suggest them for the consideration of Parliament, probably about the same period with the treaty of peace.

I really begin to think myself a most important personage; what would poor Pope have given to have brought down this upon his "epistle to "Augustus"?

I think you must allow, considering all things, public and private, that mine has been an odd destiny. But I prate, and will spare you.

Pray when are you most visible? or will any of your "predilections" interfere between you and me?

How is C.?¹ It is a considerable compensation for all other disturbances, that she has left us in peace, and I do not think you will ever be further troubled with her anniversary scenes.

I am glad you like the Corsair, and was afraid he might be too larmoyant a gentleman for your favour. But all these externals are nothing to *that within*, on a subject to which I have not alluded.

Ever y^rs most affectly,

B.

P.S. Murray took fright and shuffled in my absence, as you say, but I made him instantly

¹ Lady Caroline Lamb.

replace the lines as before.¹ It was not time to shrink now, and if it were otherwise, they should never be expunged and never shall. All the edicts on earth could not suppress their circulation, after the foolish fuss of these journalists who merely extend the demands of curiosity by the importance they attach to two "doggerel stanzas," as they repeatedly call them.

41. *To John Hamilton Reynolds*

Feb. 20, 1814.

SIR,—My absence from London till within these last few days, and business since, have hitherto prevented my acknowledgment of the volume I have lately received,² and the inscription which it contains, for both of which I beg leave to return my thanks, and best wishes for the success of the book and its author. The poem itself, as the work of a young man, is creditable to your talents, and promises better for future efforts than any which I can now recollect. Whether you intend to pursue your poetical career, I do not know, and have no right to enquire—but, in whatever channel your abilities are directed, I think it will be your own fault if they do not eventually lead to distinction. Happiness must, of course, depend upon conduct,—and even fame itself would be but a poor compensation for self-reproach. You will excuse me for talking to a man, perhaps not many years my junior, with these grave airs of seniority ; but though I cannot claim much advantage in that respect, it was my

¹ On the Princess Charlotte.

² *Safie, an Eastern Tale*, by John Hamilton Reynolds, the friend of Keats.

lot to be thrown very early upon the world, to mix a good deal in it in more climates than one, and to purchase experience which would probably have been of greater service to any one than myself. But my business with you is in your capacity of author, and to that I will confine myself.

The first thing a young writer must expect, and yet can least of all suffer, is *criticism*. I did not bear it—a few years, and many changes have since passed over my head, and my reflections on that subject are attended with regret. I find, on dispassionate comparison, my own revenge more than the provocation warranted. It is true, I was very young,—that might be an excuse to those I attacked—but to *me* it is none. The best reply to all objections is to write better, and if your enemies will not then do you justice, the world will. On the other hand, you should not be discouraged; to be opposed is not to be vanquished, though a timid mind is apt to mistake every scratch for a mortal wound. There is a saying of Dr. Johnson's, which it is as well to remember, that “no man was ever written down “except by himself.”¹ I hope you will meet with as few obstacles as yourself can desire; but if you should, you will find that they are to be *stepped* over; to *kick* them down is the first resolve of a young and fiery spirit, a pleasant thing enough at the time, but not so afterwards: on this point, I speak of a man's *own* reflections; what others think or say is a *secondary* consideration, at least, it has been so with me, but will not answer as a general maxim: he who

¹ *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides.*

would make his way in the world, must let the world believe that it was made for him, and accommodate himself to the minutest observance of its regulations. I beg once more to thank you for your pleasing present,

And have the honour to be,

Your obliged and very obedient servant, BYRON.

42. *To Francis Hodgson*

February 28, 1814.

There is a youngster, and a clever one, named Reynolds, who has just published a poem called *Safe* published by Cawthorne. He is in the most natural and fearful apprehension of the Reviewers; and as you and I both know by experience the effect of such things upon a *young* mind, I wish *you* would take his production into dissection, and do it *gently*.¹ I cannot, because it is inscribed to me; but I assure you this is not my motive for wishing him to be tenderly entreated, but because I know the misery, at his time of life, of untoward remarks upon first appearance.

Now for *self*. Pray thank your *cousin*—it is just as it should be, to my liking, and probably *more* than will suit any one else's. I hope and trust you are well and well doing. Peace be with you.

Ever yours, my dear friend.

43. *To John Murray*

March 12, 1814.

MY DEAR SIR.—I have not time to read the whole MS.,² but what I have seen seems very well

¹ *Safe* was reviewed in the *Monthly Review* in September by Hodgson.

² Of a satire, entitled *Anti-Byron*, which had been sent to Murray, and by him forwarded to Byron.

written (both *prose* and *verse*), and, though I am and can be no judge (at least a *fair* one on this subject), containing nothing which you *ought* to hesitate publishing upon *my* account. If the author is not Dr. *Busby*¹ himself, I think it a pity, on his *own* account, that he should dedicate it to his subscribers; nor can I perceive what Dr. B. has to do with the matter except as a translator of Lucretius, for whose doctrines he is surely not responsible. I tell you openly, and really most sincerely, that, if published at all, there is no earthly reason why you should *not*; on the contrary, I should receive it as the fairest compliment *you* could pay to your good opinion of my candour, to print and circulate that or any other work, attacking me in a manly manner, and without any malicious intention, from which, as far as I have seen, I must exonerate this writer.

He is wrong in one thing—I am no *Atheist*; but if he thinks I have published principles tending to such opinions, he has a perfect right to controvert them. Pray publish it; I shall never forgive myself if I think that I have prevented you.

Make my compliments to the Author, and tell him I wish him success: his verse is very deserving of it; and I shall be the last person to suspect his motives.

Yours very truly.

BYRON.

P.S.—If *you* do not publish it, some one else will. You cannot suppose me so *narrow*-minded as to shrink from discussion. I repeat once for all, that I think it a good poem (as far as I have

¹ Dr. Thomas Busby, for some time Assistant Editor of the *Morning Post*.

redde); and that is the only point *you* should consider. How odd that *eight lines* should have given birth, I really think, to *eight thousand*, including *all* that has been said, and will be on the subject!

44. To Thomas Moore

August 13, 1814.

I wrote yesterday to Mayfield, and have just now enfranked your letter to mamma. My stay in town is so uncertain (not later than next week) that your packets for the north may not reach me; and as I know not exactly where I am going—however, *Newstead* is my most probable destination, and if you send your despatches before Tuesday, I can forward them to our new ally. But, after that day, you had better not trust to their arrival in time.

Lord Kinnaird has been exiled from Paris, *on dit*, for saying the Bourbons were old women. The Bourbons might have been content, I think, with returning the compliment. * * *

I told you all about Jacky and Larry¹ yesterday;—they are to be separated,—at least, so says the grand M.,² and I know no more of the matter. Jeffrey has done me more than "justice;" but as to tragedy³—um!—I have no time for fiction at present. A man cannot paint a storm with the vessel under bare poles on a lee-shore. When I get to land, I will try what is to be done, and if I founder, there be plenty of mine elders and betters to console Melpomene.

¹ Byron's *Lara* and Rogers' *Jacqueline* (which were published in one volume in August 1814).

² John Murray.

³ Jeffrey had said that he would like to see Byron write a tragedy.

When at Newstead, you must come over, if only a day—should Mrs. M. be *exigeante* of your presence. The place is worth seeing, as a ruin, and I can assure you there *was* some fun there, even in my time; but that is past. The ghosts,¹ however, and the gothics, and the waters, and the desolation, make it very lively still.

Ever, dear Tom, yours, etc.

45. To Thomas Moore

NEWSTEAD ABBEY, September 15, 1814.

This is the fourth letter I have begun to you within the month. Whether I shall finish or not, or burn it like the rest, I know not. When we meet, I will explain *why* I have not written—*why* I have not asked you here, as I wished—with a great many other *whys* and wherefores, which will keep cold. In short, you must excuse all my seeming omissions and commissions, and grant me more remission than St. Athanasius will to yourself, if you lop off a single shred of mystery from his pious puzzle. It is my creed (and it may be St. Athanasius's too) that your article on Thurlow² will get somebody killed, and *that* on the *Saints* get him damned afterwards, which will be quite enow for one number. Oons, Tom! you must not meddle just now with the incomprehensible; for if Johanna Southcote³ turns out to be * * *

Now for a little egotism. My affairs stand thus. To-morrow I shall know whether a circum-

¹ Byron thought he had seen the ghost of a Black Friar which was supposed to have haunted the Abbey since the dissolution of the monasteries.

² Moore reviewed Lord Thurlow's *Poems* in the *Edinburgh Review*.

³ Joanna Southcott (1750–1814), the prophesying Methodist.

stance of importance enough to change many of my plans will occur or not. If it does not, I am off for Italy next month, and London, in the mean time, next week. I have got back Newstead and twenty-five thousand pounds (out of twenty-eight paid already),—as a “sacrifice,” the late purchaser calls it, and he may choose his own name. I have paid some of my debts, and contracted others; but I have a few thousand pounds, which I can’t spend after my own heart in this climate, and so, I shall go back to the south. Hobhouse, I think and hope, will go with me; but, whether he will or not, I shall. I want to see Venice, and the Alps, and Parmesan cheeses, and look at the coast of Greece, or rather Epirus, from Italy, as I once did—or fancied I did—that of Italy, when off Corfu. All this, however, depends upon an event, which may, or may not, happen. Whether it will, I shall know probably to-morrow; and, if it does, I can’t well go abroad at present.

Pray pardon this parenthetical scrawl. You shall hear from me again soon;—I don’t call this an answer.

Ever most affectionately, etc.

The event to which Byron alluded at the end of the last letter was his second proposal to Miss Milbanke, which was accepted.

Byron thus described Miss Milbanke’s appearance to Medwin—“There was something piquant “and what we term pretty in Miss Milbanke. “Her features were small and feminine, though “not regular. She had the fairest skin imaginable. “The figure was perfect for her height.” The roundness of her face suggested to Byron the pet

name of Pippin. Hobhouse's description of her was "rather dowdy-looking, and wears a long "and high dress, though she has excellent feet "and ankles. The lower part of her face is bad, "the upper expressive, but not handsome; yet "she gains by inspection."

She was fond of mathematics, a student of theology and of Greek, and a writer of verse. Byron said of her that "she was governed by "what she called fixed rules and principles, "squared mathematically;" at one time he used to speak of her as his "Princess of Parallelograms," and at a later period he called her his "Mathematical Medea."

Before she met Byron she was courted by Augustus Foster, whose mother, Lady Elizabeth Foster, afterwards Duchess of Devonshire, writing to her son, said "She is good, amiable, and sensible, but cold, prudent, and reflecting. . . . Your Annabella is a mystery; liking, not liking; generous-minded, yet afraid of poverty; there is no making her out. I hope you don't make yourself unhappy about her; she is really an icicle."

It is clear that Byron admired and respected her. We know that before he met her he had at times, in a general way, contemplated marrying. Even Sir Leslie Stephen, with his unsympathetic attitude to Byron, admits that he may be acquitted of mercenary motives:—"He "never acted upon calculation, and had he wished "he might probably have turned his attractions to "better account." Lady Melbourne, who knew

him intimately, and who was Miss Milbanke's aunt, encouraged the match. It is unnecessary to suppose that she did so to save Lady Caroline Lamb, her daughter-in-law; that danger was over. On the other hand we need not take seriously Byron's statement to Medwin that Miss Milbanke was not in love with him ("I was the fashion when she first came out; I had the character of being a great rake, and was a great dandy—both of which young ladies like. She married me from vanity, and the hope of reforming and fixing me"). Byron was fascinating; and Miss Milbanke probably loved him as much as it was in her nature to do.

46. *To John Hanson*

NEWSTEAD ABBEY, *Sept. 18th, 1814.*

DEAR SIR,—I shall be in London this week, where it is highly expedient that I should see you immediately on business, as I am engaged to a lady with whose name you are not unacquainted—Miss Milbanke, the daughter of Sir R. Milbanke. I have this day received her acceptance, and an invitation from Sir R. to join them in the country. You *will keep this a secret for the present*, and let me see you soon,—for obvious reasons, to discuss the state of my affairs, and the expediency of retaining or selling Newstead or Rochdale; also what settlements it will be proper for me to make, with various other details which will arise on our meeting.

Under these circumstances you will see that I shall not be able to have the honour of joining

your Son-in-law the Earl¹ at Hurstbourne for the present (to whom and the Countess I beg my best respects), and I do hope you will do me the favour to meet me in London, as soon after the receipt of this as you conveniently can.

I have written to Mr. Hodgson about *Newton*,² and you shall have his answer on my receiving it. I think him the best man in the world in temper, character, and learning, to make your child all you wish him.

Very truly yours,

B.

P.S.—I expect to be in town on Thursday next.

47. To Thomas Moore

NEWSTEAD ABBEY, Sept. 20, 1814.

Here's to her who long

Hath waked the poet's sigh!

The girl who gave to song

What gold could never buy.

MY DEAR MOORE,—I am going to be married—that is, I am accepted, and one usually hopes the rest will follow. My mother of the Gracchi (that *are* to be), *you* think too strait-laced for me, although the paragon of only children, and invested with “golden opinions of all sorts of “men,”³ and full of “most blest conditions”⁴ as Desdemona herself. Miss Milbanke is the lady, and I have her father's invitation to proceed there in my elect capacity,—which, however, I cannot do till I have settled some business in London, and got a blue coat.

¹ Lord Portsmouth married, as his second wife, Mary Anne, eldest daughter of John Hanson. In 1828 the marriage was annulled, a jury having decided that Lord Portsmouth was *non compos mentis* when he contracted it.

² Newton Hanson became Hodgson's pupil.

³ *Macbeth*, I, vii, 33.

⁴ *Othello*, II, i, 249.

She is said to be an heiress, but of that I really know nothing certainly, and shall not enquire. But I do know, that she has talents and excellent qualities ; and you will not deny her judgment, after having refused six suitors and taken me.

Now, if you have any thing to say against this, pray do ; my mind's made up, positively fixed, determined, and therefore I will listen to reason, because now it can do no harm. Things may occur to break it off, but I will hope not. In the mean time, I tell you (a *secret*, by the by,—at least, till I know she wishes it to be public) that I have proposed and am accepted. You need not be in a hurry to wish me joy, for one mayn't be married for months. I am going to town to-morrow : but expect to be here, on my way there, within a fortnight.

If this had not happened, I should have gone to Italy. In my way down, perhaps, you will meet me at Nottingham, and come over with me here. I need not say that nothing will give me greater pleasure. I must, of course, reform thoroughly ; and, seriously, if I can contribute to her happiness, I shall secure my own. She is so good a person, that—that—in short, I wish I was a better.

Ever, etc.

48. *To the Countess of * * **

ALBANY, October 5, 1814.

DEAR LADY * *,—Your recollection and invitation do me great honour ; but I am going to be “married, and can't come.”¹ My intended is two hundred miles off, and the moment my business here is arranged, I must set out in a great hurry

¹ St. Luke, xiv, 20.

to be happy. Miss Milbanke is the good-natured person who has undertaken me and, of course, I am very much in love, and as silly as all single gentlemen must be in that sentimental situation. I have been accepted these three weeks; but when the event will take place, I don't exactly know. It depends partly upon lawyers, who are never in a hurry. One can be sure of nothing; but, at present, there appears no other interruption to this intention, which seems as mutual as possible and now no secret, though I did not tell first,—and all our relatives are congratulating away to right and left in the most fatiguing manner.

You perhaps know the lady. She is niece to Lady Melbourne, and cousin to Lady Cowper and others of your acquaintance, and has no fault, except being a great deal too good for me, and that I must pardon, if nobody else should. It might have been *two* years ago, and, if it had, would have saved me a world of trouble. She has employed the interval in refusing about half a dozen of my particular friends, (as she did me once, by the way,) and has taken me at last, for which I am very much obliged to her. I wish it was well over, for I do hate bustle, and there is no marrying without some;—and then, I must not marry in a black coat, they tell me, and I can't bear a blue one.

Pray forgive me for scribbling all this nonsense. You know I must be serious all the rest of my life, and this is a parting piece of buffoonery, which I write with tears in my eyes, expecting to be agitated. Believe me, most seriously and sincerely
your obliged servant,

BYRON.

P.S.—My best rems. to Lord * * on his return.

49. *To Miss Milbanke*

[EXTRACT.]

Oct. 7th, 1814.

It gives me much pleasure to hear that Augusta has written to you. She is the least selfish and gentlest creature in being—and more attached to me than any one in existence can be. She was particularly desirous that I should marry and only regretted, what I must regret a little too, that she had not earlier the pleasure of your acquaintance. She was very anxious for the fate and favourable reception of her letter to you.

50. *To Lady Melbourne**November 13, 1814.*

MY DEAR LADY M^e,—I delivered your letters, but have only mentioned y^e receipt of your last to myself.

Do you know I have grave doubts if this will be a marriage now? Her disposition is the very reverse of our imaginings. She is overrun with fine feelings, scruples about herself and her disposition (I suppose, in fact, she means mine), and to crown all, is taken ill once every three days with I know not what. But the day before, and the day after, she seems well; looks and eats well, and is cheerful and confiding, and in short like any other person in good health and spirits. A few days ago she made one *scene*, not altogether out of C.'s style; it was too long and too trifling, in fact, for me to transcribe, but it did me no good. In the article of conversation, however, she has improved with a vengeance, but I don't much admire these same agitations upon slight occasions.

I don't know, but I think it by no means improbable, you will see me in town soon. I can only interpret these things one way, and merely wait to be certain, to make my obeisance and "exit singly." I hear of nothing but "feeling" from morning till night, except from Sir Ralph, with whom I go on to admiration. L^y Milbanke too is pretty well; but I am never sure of A. for a moment. The least word, and you know I rattle on through thick and thin (always, however, avoiding anything I think can offend her favourite notions), if only to prevent me from yawning. The least word, or alteration of tone, has some inference drawn from it. Sometimes we are too much alike, and then again too unlike. This comes of system, and squaring her notions to the devil knows what. For my part, I have lately had recourse to the eloquence of *action* (which Demosthenes calls the first part of oratory), and find it succeeds very well, and makes her very quiet; which gives me some hopes of the efficacy of the "calming process," so renowned in "our philosophy." In fact, and *entre nous*, it is really amusing; she is like a child in that respect, and quite caressable into kindness, and good humour; though I don't think her temper *bad* at any time, but very *self* tormenting and anxious, and romantic.

In short, it is impossible to foresee how this will end *now*, any more than two years ago; if there is a break, it shall be her doing not mine.

Ever y^rs most truly,

B.

From 13th November, 1814, to 2nd January, 1815, there is little evidence of Byron's movements.

On 2nd January he was married to Miss Milbanke at Seaham. Hobhouse, who was best man, wrote—
 “ Byron was calm and as usual. I felt as if I
 “ had buried a friend. At a little before twelve I
 “ handed Lady Byron down stairs and into her
 “ carriage. When I wished her many years of
 “ happiness, she said, ‘ If I am not happy it will
 “ be my fault.’ ” A note from Byron to Lady
 Melbourne on the following day is extant. The
 honeymoon was spent at Halnaby House, near
 Darlington.

51. *To Thomas Moore*

SEAHAM, STOCKTON-ON-TEES, *February 2, 1815.*

I have heard from London that you have left
 Chatsworth and all the women full of “ entusy-
 “ musy ”¹ about you, personally and poetically ;
 and, in particular, that “ When first I met thee ”²
 has been quite overwhelming in its effect. I told
 you it was one of the best things you ever wrote,
 though that dog Power³ wanted you to omit part
 of it. They are all regretting your absence at
 Chatsworth, according to my informant—“ all
 “ the ladies quite,” etc., etc., etc. Stap my
 vitals !

Well, now you have got home again—which I
 dare say is as agreeable as a “ draught of cool
 “ small beer to the scorched palate of a waking
 “ sot ”—now you have got home again, I say,
 probably I shall hear from you. Since I wrote

¹ So John Braham, a famous tenor of that time, by birth a German Jew, pronounced “ enthusiasm.” Byron was very fond of using the mispronunciation.

² A poem by Moore.

³ Moore’s publisher.

last, I have been transferred to my father-in-law's, with my lady and my lady's maid, etc., etc., etc., and the treacle-moon is over, and I am awake, and find myself married. My spouse and I agree to—and in—admiration. Swift says “no *wise* “man ever married;”¹ but, for a fool, I think it the most ambrosial of all possible future states. I still think one ought to marry upon *lease*; but am very sure I should renew mine at the expiration, though next term were for ninety and nine years.

I wish you would respond, for I am here *oblitusque meorum obliviscendus et illis*.² Pray tell me what is going on in the way of intrigue, and how the w——s and rogues of the upper Beggar's Opera go on—or rather go off—in or after marriage; or who are going to break any particular commandment. Upon this dreary coast, we have nothing but county meetings and shipwrecks: and I have this day dined upon fish, which dined upon the crews of several colliers lost in the late gales. But I saw the sea once more in all the glories of surf and foam,—almost equal to the Bay of Biscay, and the interesting white squalls and short seas of Archipelago memory.

My papa, Sir Ralpho, hath recently made a speech at a Durham tax-meeting; and not only at Durham, but here, several times since after dinner. He is now, I believe, speaking it to himself (I left him in the middle) over various decanters, which can neither interrupt him nor fall

¹ Swift, in *Thoughts on Various Occasions*, often refers to the wise man, and he there says, “What they *do* in Heaven we are “ignorant of; of what they do *not* we are told expressly: that “they neither marry, nor are given in marriage.”

² See p. 39, note.

asleep,—as might possibly have been the case with some of his audience.

Ever thine,

B.

I must go to tea—damn tea. I wish it was Kinnaird's brandy,¹ and with you to lecture me about it.

52. To John Murray

SEAHAM, STOCKTON-UPON-TEES, *February 2, 1815.*

DEAR SIR,—You will oblige me very much by making an occasional inquiry in Albany, at my chambers, whether my books, etc., are kept in tolerable order, and how far my old woman² continues in health and industry as keeper of my late den. Your parcels have been duly received and perused; but I had hoped to receive *Guy Mannering* before this time. I won't intrude further for the present on your avocations, professional or pleasurable, but am, as usual,

Very truly yours,

BYRON.

53. To Thomas Moore

March 2, 1815.

MY DEAR THOM—Jeffrey has sent me the most friendly of all possible letters, and has accepted

¹ Douglas James William Kinnaird, a banker; an intimate friend of Hobhouse; and a member of the Management Committee of Drury Lane Theatre.

² Mrs. Mule—an "ancient housemaid," Moore describes her, "of gaunt and witch-like appearance—the perpetual scarecrow "of Byron's visitors." Byron first found her at his lodgings in Bennet Street in 1813. When next year he took chambers in the Albany he brought her with him, and after his marriage she became a member of his domestic establishment in Piccadilly. When asked how he came to carry this old woman about with him from place to place, Byron's only answer was "The poor "old devil was so kind to me."

Hobhouse's article.¹ He says he has long liked not only, etc., etc., but my character. This must be *your* doing, you dog—ar'nt you ashamed of yourself, knowing me so well?—This is what one gets for having you for a father confessor.

I feel merry enough to send you a sad song.² You once asked me for some words which you would set. Now you may set or not, as you like, —but there they are in a legible hand ;³ and not in mine, but of my own scribbling ; so you may say of them what you please. Why don't you write to me ? I shall make you " a " speech " if you don't respond quickly.

I am in such a state of sameness and stagnation, and so totally occupied in consuming the fruits—and sauntering —and playing dull games at cards —and yawning—and trying to read old Annual Registers and the daily papers—and gathering shells on the shore—and watching the growth of stunted gooseberry bushes in the garden—that I have neither time nor sense to say more than

Yours ever,

B.

P.S.—I open my letter again to put a question to you. What would Lady Cork,⁴ or any other fashionable Pidcock,⁵ give to collect you and Jeffrey and me to *one* party ? I have been answering his letter, which suggested this dainty query. I can't help laughing at the thoughts of your face and mine ; and our anxiety to keep the Aristarch

¹ A criticism in the *Edinburgh Review* of Leake's *Researches in Greece*.

² " There's not a joy the world can give like those it takes away."

³ Of Lady Byron.

⁴ The Countess of Cork, a fashionable lion-hunter.

⁵ The keeper of the lions at Exeter 'Change.

in good humour during the *early* part of a composition, till we got drunk enough to make him " a " speech." I think the critic would have much the best of us—of one, at least—for I don't think diffidence (I mean social) is a disease of yours.

54. *To Thomas Moore*

March 8, 1815.

An event—the death of poor Dorset—and the recollection of what I once felt, and ought to have felt now, but could not—set me pondering, and finally into the train of thought which you have in your hands. I am very glad you like them, for I flatter myself they will pass as an imitation of your style. If I could imitate it well, I should have no great ambition of originality—I wish I could make you exclaim with Dennis, " That's my " thunder, by G—d ! " ¹ I wrote them with a view to your setting them, and as a present to Power, if he would accept the words, and *you* did not think yourself degraded, for once in a way, by marrying them to music.

Sun-burn ² Nathan !—why do you always twit me with his vile Ebrew nasalities ? Have I not told you it was all Kinnaird's doing,³ and my own exquisite facility of temper ? But thou wilt be a wag, Thomas ; and see what you get for it. Now for my revenge.

Depend—and perpend—upon it that your

¹ John Dennis (1657–1734) invented a new method of making thunder, for his tragedy *Appius and Virginia* which was withdrawn, and he was enraged at finding his invention employed in another play.

² A favourite expletive of Byron's.

³ At Kinnaird's suggestion, Byron wrote *Hebrew Melodies*, (set to music by Isaac Nathan and John Braham).

opinion of Scott's poem will travel through one or other of the quintuple correspondents,¹ till it reaches the ear, and the liver of the author. Your adventure, however, is truly laughable—but how could you be such a potatoe? You “a brother” (of the quill) too, “near the throne,” to confide to a man's *own publisher* (who has “bought,” or rather sold, “golden opinions” about him) such a damnatory parenthesis! “Between you and “me,” quotha—it reminds me of a passage in the *Heir at Law*²—“Tête-à-tête with Lady Duberly, “I suppose.”—“No—tête-à-tête with *five hundred “people ;”* and your confidential communication will doubtless be in circulation to that amount, in a short time, with several additions, and in several letters, all signed L. H. R. O. B., etc., etc., etc.

We leave this place to-morrow, and shall stop on our way to town (in the interval of taking a house there) at Col. Leigh's, near Newmarket, where any epistle of yours will find its welcome way.

I have been very comfortable here,—listening to that damned monologue, which elderly gentlemen call conversation, and in which my pious father-in-law repeats himself every evening—save one, when he played upon the fiddle. However, they have been very kind and hospitable, and I like them and the place vastly, and I hope they will live many happy months. Bell is in health, and unvaried good-humour and behaviour. But we are all in the agonies of packing and parting; and, I suppose, by this time to-morrow I

¹ Moore had written to the publishers of the *Lord of the Isles*, Messrs. Longman, Hurst, Orme, Rees, and Brown, saying that, “between you and me,” he did not like the poem.

² By George Colman the Younger.

shall be stuck in the chariot with my chin upon a band-box. I have prepared, however, another carriage for the abigail, and all the trumpery which our wives drag along with them.

Ever thine, most affectionately, B.

55. *To Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

PICCADILLY, March 31, 1815.

DEAR SIR,—It will give me great pleasure to comply with your request,¹ though I hope there is still taste enough left amongst us to render it almost unnecessary, sordid and interested as, it must be admitted, many of “the trade” are, where circumstances give them an advantage. I trust you do not permit yourself to be depressed by the temporary partiality of what is called “the public” for the favourites of the moment; all experience is against the permanency of such impressions. You must have lived to see many of these pass away, and will survive many more—I mean personally, for *poetically*, I would not insult you by a comparison.

If I may be permitted, I would suggest that there never was such an opening for tragedy. In Kean, there is an actor worthy of expressing the thoughts of the characters which you have every power of embodying; and I cannot but regret that the part of Ordonio was disposed of before his appearance at Drury Lane. We have had nothing to be mentioned in the same breath with *Remorse*² for very many years; and I should think that the reception of that play was sufficient

¹ That Byron should bargain on his behalf with a publisher for a volume of collected poems. In 1816 Murray published a volume containing *Christabel* and other poems.

² By Coleridge—produced at Drury Lane in 1813.

to encourage the highest hopes of author and audience. It is to be hoped that you are proceeding in a career which could not but be successful. With my best respects to Mr. Bowles,¹ I have the honour to be,

Your obliged and very obedient servant, BYRON.

P.S.—You mention my “Satire,”² a lampoon, or whatever you or others please to call it. I can only say that it was written when I was very young and very angry, and has been a thorn in my side ever since; more particularly as almost all the persons animadverted upon became subsequently my acquaintances, and some of them my friends, which is “heaping fire upon an enemy’s head,” and forgiving me too readily to permit me to forgive myself. The part applied to you is pert, and petulant, and shallow enough; but, although I have long done every thing in my power to suppress the circulation of the whole thing, I shall always regret the wantonness or generality of many of its attempted attacks.

56. To * * *

PICCADILLY TERRACE, July 18th, 1815.

MY DEAR SIR,—A Volume of Poems of which I have the pleasure of congratulating you as the author, was yesterday put into my hands, by the Bookseller—the satisfaction I experienced from the perusal, made me anxious for the immediate acquaintance and society of the Gentleman, who has so kindly favoured the world with the production of his leisure hours. As the first efforts of

¹ Rev. William Lisle Bowles, Vicar of Bremhill, near Calne, where Coleridge was at this time staying.

² *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers.*

an aspiring muse they merit the warmest approbation. The works of the most experienced in the art, are not however void of defect, and be you not therefore surprised, if the eye of greater experience, though not of superior genius, to yourself may have discovered some redundancies of style—some points capable of correction, in the Volume before us.

I hope I shall not offend by offering my opinion, and soliciting your Company to Breakfast, on Friday Morning next for that purpose. To be allowed to guide your poetic flight to fame and to usher to the world your future labours is the earnest wish of

My dear sir, your faithful friend and warm admirer,

BYRON.

The following passages from Byron's *Detached Thoughts* (1821) refer to his connection with the management of Drury Lane Theatre:—

When I belonged to the Drury Lane Committee and was one of the Sub-Committee of Management, the number of *plays* upon the shelves were about *five* hundred. Conceiving that amongst these there must be *some* of merit, in person and by proxy I caused an investigation. I do not think that of those which I saw there was one which could be conscientiously tolerated. There never were such things as most of them! Mathurin¹ was very kindly recommended to me by Walter Scott, to whom I had recourse, firstly, in the hope that he would do something for us himself; and, secondly, in despair, that he would point out to us any young (or old) writer of promise. Mathurin sent his *Bertram* and a

¹ Rev. Charles Robert Maturin.

letter *without* his address, so that at first I could give him no answer. When I at last hit upon his residence, I sent him a favourable answer and something more substantial. His play succeeded; but I was at that time absent from England.

I tried Coleridge too: but he had nothing feasible in hand at the time. Mr. Sotheby¹ obligingly offered *all* his tragedies, and I pledged myself, and, notwithstanding many squabbles with my Committed Brethren, did get *Ivan* accepted, read, and the parts distributed. But, lo! in the very heart of the matter, upon some *tepidness* on the part of Kean, or warmth on that of the author, Sotheby withdrew his play. Sir James Bland Burges did also present four tragedies and a farce, and I moved green-room and Sub-Committee, but they would not.

Then the scenes I had to go through!—the authors, and the authoresses, and the milliners, and the wild Irishmen,—the people from Brighton, from Blackwall, from Chatham, from Cheltenham, from Dublin, from Dundee,—who came in upon me! to all of whom it was proper to give a civil answer, and a hearing, and a reading. Mrs. Glover's father, an Irish dancing-master of sixty years, calling upon me to request to play *Archer*, dressed in silk stockings on a frosty morning to show his legs (which were certainly good and Irish for his age, and had been still better),—Miss Emma Somebody, with a play entitled *The Bandit of Bohemia*, or some such title or production,—Mr. O'Higgins, then resident at Richmond, with an Irish tragedy, in which the unities could not

¹ William Sotheby, a man of letters and fortune.

fail to be observed, for the protagonist was chained by the leg to a pillar during the chief part of the performance. He was a wild man, of a savage appearance, and the difficulty of *not* laughing at him was only to be got over by reflecting upon the probable consequences of such cachinnation.

As I am really a civil and polite person, and *do* hate pain when it can be avoided, I sent them up to Douglas Kinnaird,—who is a man of business, and sufficiently ready with a negative,—and left them to settle with him; and as at the beginning of next year I went abroad, I have since been little aware of the progress of the theatres.

Players are said to be an impracticable people. They are so; but I managed to steer clear of any disputes with them, and excepting one debate with the elder Byrne about Miss Smith's *pas de*—(something—I forget the technicals,)—I do not remember any litigation of my own. I used to protect Miss Smith, because she was like Lady Jane Harley in the face, and likenesses go a great way with me. Indeed, in general, I left such things to my more bustling colleagues, who used to reprove me seriously for not being able to take such things in hand without buffooning with the histrions, or throwing things into confusion by treating light matters with levity.

Then the Committee!—then the Sub-Committee!—we were but few, but never agreed. There was Peter Moore who contradicted Kinnaird, and Kinnaird who contradicted every body: then our two managers, Rae and Dibdin; and our secretary, Ward! and yet we were all very zealous and in earnest to do good and so forth. George

Lamb furnished us with prologues to our revived old English plays; but was not pleased with me for complimenting him as "the Upton" of our theatre (Mr. Upton is or was the poet who writes the songs for Astley's), and almost gave up prologuing in consequence.

In the pantomime of 1815-16 there was a representation of the masquerade of 1814, given by "us youth" of Watier's Club to Wellington and Co. Douglas Kinnaird and one or two others, with myself, put on masks, and went on the stage with the οἱ πολλοί, to see the effect of a theatre from the stage:—it is very grand. Douglas danced among the figuranti too, and they were puzzled to find out who we were, as being more than their number. It was odd enough that Douglas Kinnaird and I should have been both at the *real* masquerade, and afterwards in the mimic one of the same, on the stage of Drury Lane theatre.

In 1813 Byron and Moore had visited Leigh Hunt when he was in prison for publishing some reflections on the Prince Regent. Hunt was still serving his sentence—though continuing to edit the *Examiner*—at the date of the following letter.

Byron's friendship for Hunt began in political sympathy, but cooled on closer acquaintance. "Our tastes," Byron said (Lady Blessington's *Conversations*) "are so opposite that we are totally unsuited to each other." In 1822, on the invitation of Shelley and Byron, Hunt went out to Italy to edit the *Liberal*. The death of Shelley and the failure of the paper brought the uncon-

geniality of Byron and Hunt into stark relief. Byron could never tolerate the attitude and manners of "virtuous, slipshod, Cockney Bohemianism;" as he put it, the only two types of artist he liked were the man of the world like Moore, and the out-of-the-world visionary like Shelley. On the other hand Hunt—stranded in Italy, and for two years virtually Byron's guest—resented the latter's air of lordly condescension. After Byron's death Hunt wrote *Lord Byron and his Contemporaries*, the publication of which was attacked by Moore in *The Living Dog and the Dead Lion*; a rejoinder from Leigh Hunt's side was made in *The Giant and the Dwarf*.

57. To Leigh Hunt

13, TERRACE, PICCADILLY, September—October 30, 1815.

MY DEAR HUNT,—Many thanks for your books, of which you already know my opinion. Their external splendour should not disturb you as inappropriate—they have still more within than without. I take leave to differ with you on Wordsworth,¹ as freely as I once agreed with you; at that time I gave him credit for a promise, which is unfulfilled. I still think his capacity warrants all you say of *it* only, but that his performances since *Lyrical Ballads* are miserably inadequate to the ability which lurks within him: there is undoubtedly much natural talent spilt over the *Excursion*; but it is rain upon rocks—where it stands and stagnates, or rain upon sands—where it falls without fertilizing. Who can understand him? Let those who do, make him intelligible.

¹ In *The Feast of the Poets*.

Jacob Behmen, Swedenborg, and Joanna Southcote, are mere types of this arch-apostle of mystery and mysticism. But I have done,—no, I have not done, for I have two petty, and perhaps unworthy objections in small matters to make to him, which, with his pretensions to accurate observation, and fury against Pope's false translation of "the Moonlight scene in Homer,"¹ I wonder he should have fallen into;—these be they:—He says of Greece in the body of his book²—that it is a land of

*" Rivers, fertile plains, and sounding shores,
Under a cope of variegated sky."*

The rivers are dry half the year, the plains are barren, and the shores *still* and *tideless* as the Mediterranean can make them; the sky is any thing but variegated, being for months and months but "darkly, deeply, beautifully blue."—The next is in his notes, where he talks of our "Monuments crowded together in the busy, etc., of a large town," as compared with the "still seclusion of a Turkish cemetery in some *remote* place." This is pure stuff; for *one* monument in our churchyards there are *ten* in the Turkish, and so crowded, that you cannot walk between them; that is, divided merely by a path or road; and as to "*remote* places," men never take the trouble in a barbarous country, to carry their dead very far; they must have lived near to where they were buried. There are no cemeteries in "*remote* places," except such as have the cypress and the tombstone still left, where the

¹ In "Essay Supplementary to the Preface" of *Poems* (1815). The passage is Iliad VIII, 555 *et seq.*; Pope's version ll. 687–98.

² *Excursion*, IV, 718.

olive and the habitation of the living have perished. . . .

These things I was struck with, as coming peculiarly in my own way ; and in both of these he is wrong ; yet I should have noticed neither, but for his attack on Pope for a like blunder, and a peevish affectation about him of despising a popularity which he will never obtain. I write in great haste, and, I doubt, *not* much to the purpose ; but you have it hot and hot, just as it comes, and so let it go. By-the-way, both he and you go too far against Pope's " So when the moon " etc. ; it is no translation, I know ; but it is not such false description as asserted. I have read it on the spot ; there is a burst, and a lightness, and a glow about the night in the Troad, which makes the " planets vivid," and the " pole glowing." The moon is—at least the sky is, clearness itself ; and I know no more appropriate expression for the expansion of such a heaven—o'er the scene—the plain—the sky—Ida—the Hellespont—Simois—Scamander—and the Isles—than that of a " flood of glory." I am getting horribly lengthy, and must stop : to the whole of your letter " I say ditto to Mr. Burke," as the Bristol candidate cried by way of electioneering harangue.¹ You need not speak of morbid feelings and vexations to me ; I have plenty ; but I must blame partly the times, and chiefly myself : but let us forget them. *I* shall be very apt to do so when I see you next. Will you come to the theatre and see our new management ? You shall cut it up to your heart's content, root and

¹ When Edmund Burke and Henry Cruger were returned for Bristol in 1774, the latter's electioneering speech consisted of the words quoted above.

branch, afterwards, if you like ; but come and see it ! If not, I must come and see you.

Ever yours, very truly and affectionately,

BYRON.

58. To John Murray

November 4, 1815.

DEAR SIR,—When you have been enabled to form an opinion on Mr. Coleridge's MS.¹ you will oblige me by returning it, as, in fact, I have no authority to let it out of my hands. I think most highly of it, and feel anxious that you should be the publisher ; but if you are not, I do not despair of finding those who will.

I have written to Mr. Lh. Hunt, stating your willingness to treat with him, which, when I saw you, I understood you to be. Terms and time, I leave to his pleasure and your discernment ; but this I will say, that I think it² the *safest* thing you ever engaged in. I speak to you as a man of business ; were I to talk to you as a reader or a critic, I should say it was a very wonderful and beautiful performance, with just enough of fault to make its beauties more remarked and remarkable.

And now to the last—my own,³ which I feel ashamed of after the others ;—publish or not as you like, I don't care *one damn*. If you don't, no one else shall, and I never thought or dreamed of it, except as one in the collection. If it is worth being in the fourth volume, put it there and nowhere else ; and if not, put it in the fire.

Yours,

B^N.

¹ *Christabel*.

² *The Story of Rimini*.

³ *The Siege of Corinth*.

59. To John Murray

January 3, 1816.

DEAR SIR,—Your offer is *liberal* in the extreme, (you see I use the word *to* you and *of* you, though I would not consent to your using it of yourself to Mr. H.) and much more than the two poems¹ can possibly be worth; but I cannot accept it, nor will not. You are most welcome to them as additions to the collected volumes, without any demand or expectation on my part whatever. But I cannot consent to their separate publication. I do not like to risk any fame (whether merited or not), which I have been favoured with, upon compositions which I do not feel to be at all equal to my own notions of what they should be, (and as I flatter myself some *have been*, here and there,) though they may do very well as things without pretension, to add to the publication with the lighter pieces.

I am very glad that the handwriting was a favourable omen of the *morale* of the piece: but you must not trust to that, for my copyist² would write out any thing I desired in all the ignorance of innocence—I hope, however, in this instance with no great peril to either.

Yours very truly,

BYRON.

P.S.—I have inclosed your draft *torn*, for fear of accidents by the way—I wish you would not throw temptation in mine. It is not from a

¹ *The Siege of Corinth* and *Parisina*. Murray had sent Byron 1,000 guineas. Byron refused to accept this. Later he contemplated giving £600 to Godwin and £450 between Coleridge and Maturin. On Murray's protest, and hard pressed by creditors, he eventually accepted the money and applied it to debts.

² Lady Byron.

disdain of the universal idol, nor from a present superfluity of his treasures, I can assure you, that I refuse to worship him; but what is right is right, and must not yield to circumstances.

60. To Thomas Moore

January 5, 1816.

I hope Mrs. M. is quite re-established. The little girl was born on the 10th of December last; her name is Augusta *Ada* (the second a very antique family name,—I believe not used since the reign of King John). She was, and is, very flourishing and fat, and reckoned very large for her days—squalls and sucks incessantly. Are you answered? Her mother is doing very well, and up again.

I have now been married a year on the second of this month—heigh-ho! I have seen nobody lately much worth noting, except Sebastiani¹ and another general of the Gauls once or twice at dinners out of doors. Sebastiani is a fine, foreign, villanous-looking, intelligent, and very agreeable man; his compatriot² is more of the *petit-maitre* and younger, but I should think not at all of the same intellectual calibre with the Corsican—which Sebastiani, you know, is, and a cousin of Napoleon's.

Are you never to be expected in town again? To be sure, there is no one here of the fifteen hundred fillers of hot rooms, called the fashionable world. My approaching papa-ship detained us for advice, etc., etc., though I would as soon be

¹ Comte Sebastiani, afterwards a Marshal of France, and in 1835 Ambassador in London.

² Comte de Flahault, who in 1860 was Ambassador in London.

here as any where else on this side of the Straits of Gibraltar.

I would gladly—or, rather, sorrowfully—comply with your request of a dirge for the poor girl you mention. But how can I write on one I have never seen or known? Besides, you will do it much better yourself. I could not write upon any thing, without some personal experience and foundation: far less on a theme so peculiar. Now, you have both in this case; and, if you had neither, you have more imagination, and would never fail.¹

This is but a dull scrawl, and I am but a dull fellow. Just at present, I am absorbed in 500 contradictory contemplations, though with but one object in view—which will probably end in nothing, as most things we wish do. But never mind,—as somebody says, “for the blue sky bends over all.”² I only could be glad, if it bent over me where it is a little bluer; like the “skyish top of blue Olympus,”³ which, by the way, looked very white when I last saw it.

Ever, etc.

The next letter is to Samuel Rogers, whose acquaintance Byron had made when invited by him to meet Moore in 1811 (see page 66). Samuel Rogers was a member of a banking family. He was twenty-five years older than Byron, but lived to be offered the laureateship in 1850 on the death of Wordsworth, and to decline it in favour of Tennyson. Byron had considerable admira-

¹ See Moore's lines, “Weep not for those.”

² Coleridge, *Christabel*, 331.

³ *Hamlet*, V, i, 275.

tion for his poetry ; he dedicated the *Giaour* to him ; and with reference to the writer of an article in the *Quarterly Review*, who praised the *Corsair* and *Lara*, but spoke depreciatingly of Rogers' *Jacqueline*, he said : " The man's a fool. *Jacqueline* " is as superior to *Lara* as Rogers is to me." After Byron's death Rogers paid the dead poet a noble tribute in his poem *Italy*.

61. To Samuel Rogers

February 8, 1816.

DEAR ROGERS,—Do not mistake me—I really returned your book for the reason assigned, and no other. It is too good for so careless a fellow. I have parted with all my own books, and positively won't deprive you of so valuable " a drop of that " immortal man."

I shall be very glad to see you, if you like to call, as you intended, though I am at present contending with " the slings and arrows of outrageous Fortune,"¹ some of which have struck at me from a quarter whence I did not indeed expect them—But no matter ; " there is a " world elsewhere,"² and I will cut my way through this as I can ; if you write to Moore, will you tell him that I shall answer his letter the moment I can muster time and spirits ?

Ever yours,

B.

62. To John Murray

February 20, 1816.

DEAR SIR,—To return to *our* business—your epistles are vastly agreeable. With regard to the

¹ *Hamlet*, III, i, 58.

² *Coriolanus*, III, iii, 135.

observations on carelessness, etc.,¹ I think, with all humility, that the gentle reader has considered a rather uncommon, and designedly irregular versification for haste and negligence. The measure is not that of any of the other poems, which (I believe) were allowed to be tolerably correct, according to Byshe² and the fingers—or ears—by which bards write, and readers reckon. Great part of *The Siege* is in (I think) what the learned call Anapests, (though I am not sure, being heinously forgetful of my metres and my *Gradus*,) and many of the lines intentionally longer or shorter than its rhyming companion; and the rhyme also occurring at greater or less intervals of caprice or convenience.

I mean not to say that this is right or good, but merely that I could have been smoother, had it appeared to me of advantage; and that I was not otherwise without being aware of the deviation, though I now feel sorry for it, as I would undoubtedly rather please than not. My wish has been to try at something different from my former efforts; as I endeavoured to make them differ from each other. The versification of *The Corsair* is not that of *Lara*; nor *The Giaour* that of *The Bride*; *Childe Harold* is again varied from these; and I strove to vary the last somewhat from *all* of the others.

Excuse all this damned nonsense and egotism. The fact is, that I am rather trying to think on the subject of this note, than really thinking on it. I did not know you had called; you are always admitted and welcome when you choose.

Yours, etc., etc.,

BN.

¹ In reviews of the *Siege of Corinth* and *Parisina*.

² Edward Bysshe, *The Art of English Poetry* (1702).

P.S.—You need not be in any apprehension or grief on my account :¹ were I to be beaten down by the world and its inheritors, I should have succumbed to many things—years ago. You must not mistake my *not* bullying for dejection ; nor imagine that because I feel, I am to faint :—but enough for the present.

I am sorry for Sotheby's row. What the devil is it about ? I thought it all settled ; and if I can do any thing about him or *Ivan* still, I am ready and willing. I do not think it proper for me just now to be much behind the scenes, but I will see the committee and Moore upon it, if S. likes.

If you see Mr. Sotheby, will you tell him that I wrote to Mr. Coleridge, on getting Mr. Sotheby's note, and have, I hope, done what Mr. S. wished on that subject ?

63. To Thomas Moore

February 29, 1816.

I have not answered your letter for a time ; and, at present, the reply to part of it might extend to such a length, that I shall delay it till it can be made in person, and then I will shorten it as much as I can.

In the mean time, I am at war “with all the “world and his wife ;” or rather, “all the world “and *my* wife ” are at war with me, and have not yet crushed me,—whatever they *may* do. I don't know that in the course of a hair-breadth existence I was ever, at home or abroad, in a situation so completely uprooting of present pleasure, or

¹ No doubt a reference to the impending separation from Lady Byron (about which rumours were already prevalent—see next letter).

rational hope for the future, as this same. I say this, because I think so, and feel it. But I shall not sink under it the more for that mode of considering the question—I have made up my mind.

By the way, however, you must not believe all you hear on the subject; and don't attempt to defend me. If you succeeded in that, it would be a mortal, or an immortal, offence—who can bear refutation? I have but a very short answer for those whom it concerns; and all the activity of myself and some vigorous friends have not yet fixed on any tangible ground or personage, on which or with whom I can discuss matters, in a summary way, with a fair pretext;—though I nearly had *nailed one* yesterday, but he evaded by—what was judged by others—a satisfactory explanation. I speak of *circulators*—against whom I have no enmity, though I must act according to the common code of usage, when I hit upon those of the serious order.

Now for other matters—poesy, for instance. Leigh Hunt's poem¹ is a devilish good one—quaint, here and there, but with the substratum of originality, and with poetry about it, that will stand the test. I do not say this because he has inscribed it to me, which I am sorry for, as I should otherwise have begged you to review it in the *Edinburgh*. It is really deserving of much praise, and a favourable critique in the *E. R.* would but do it justice, and set it up before the public eye, where it ought to be.

How are you? and where? I have not the most distant idea what I am going to do myself—or with myself—or where—or what. I had a few

¹ *The Story of Rimini.*

weeks ago, some things to say that would have made you laugh; but they tell me now that I must not laugh, and so I have been very serious—and am.

I have not been very well—with a *liver* complaint—but am much better within the last fortnight, though still under Iatrical advice. I have latterly seen a little of * *. * * I must go and dress to dine. My little girl is in the country, and, they tell me, is a very fine child, and now nearly three months old. Lady Noel (my mother-in-law, or, rather, *at* law) is at present overlooking it. Her daughter (Miss Milbanke that was) is, I believe, in London with her father. A Mrs. C.¹ (now a kind of housekeeper and spy of Lady N.'s), who, in her better days, was a washerwoman, is supposed to be—by the learned—very much the occult cause of our late domestic discrepancies.

In all this business, I am the sorriest for Sir Ralph. He and I are equally punished, though *magis pares quam similes* in our affliction. Yet it is hard for both to suffer for the fault of one, and so it is—I shall be separated from my wife; he will retain his.

Ever, etc.

64. To Thomas Moore

March 8, 1816.

I rejoice in your promotion as Chairman and Charitable Steward, etc., etc. These be dignities which await only the virtuous. But then, recollect you are *six* and *thirty*, (I speak this enviously—not of your age, but the “honour—love—

¹ Mrs. Clermont, who had been lady's maid to Lady Milbanke, and governess to Miss Milbanke.

"obedience—troops of friends,"¹ which accompany it,) and I have eight years good to run before I arrive at such hoary perfection; by which time,—if *I am* at all,—it will probably be in a state of grace or progressing merits.

I must set you right in one point, however. The fault was *not*—no, nor even the misfortune—in my "choice" (unless in *choosing at all*)—for I do not believe—and I must say it, in the very dregs of all this bitter business—that there ever was a better, or even a brighter, a kinder, or a more amiable and agreeable being than Lady B. I never had, nor can have, any reproach to make her, while with me. Where there is blame, it belongs to myself, and, if I cannot redeem, I must bear it.

Her nearest relatives are a * * * *—my circumstances have been and are in a state of great confusion—my health has been a good deal disordered, and my mind ill at ease for a considerable period. Such are the causes (I do not name them as excuses) which have frequently driven me into excess, and disqualified my temper for comfort. Something also may be attributed to the strange and desultory habits which, becoming my own master at an early age, and scrambling about, over and through the world, may have induced. I still, however, think that, if I had a fair chance, by being placed in even a tolerable situation, I might have gone on fairly. But that seems hopeless,—and there is nothing more to be said. At present—except my health, which is better (it is odd, but agitation or contest of any kind gives a rebound to my spirits and sets me

¹ *Macbeth*, V, iii, 22.

up for the time)—I have to battle with all kinds of unpleasantnesses, including private and pecuniary difficulties, etc., etc.

I believe I may have said this before to you, but I risk repeating it. It is nothing to bear the *privations* of adversity, or, more properly, ill fortune ; but my pride recoils from its *indignities*. However, I have no quarrel with that same pride, which will, I think, buckler me through every thing. If my heart could have been broken, it would have been so years ago, and by events more afflicting than these.

I agree with you (to turn from this topic to our shop) that I have written too much. The last things were, however, published very reluctantly by me, and for reasons I will explain when we meet. I know not why I have dwelt so much on the same scenes, except that I find them fading, or *confusing* (if such a word may be) in my memory, in the midst of present turbulence and pressure, and I felt anxious to stamp before the die was worn out. I now break it. With those countries, and events connected with them, all my really poetical feelings begin and end. Were I to try, I could make nothing of any other subject, and that I have apparently exhausted. “Wo to him,” says Voltaire, “who says all he could say on any “subject.” There are some on which, perhaps, I could have said still more : but I leave them all, and too soon.

Do you remember the lines I sent you early last year, which you still have ? I don't wish (like Mr. Fitzgerald, in the *Morning Post*) to claim the character of “Vates” in all its translations, but were they not a little prophetic ? I mean those beginning, “There's not a joy the world

"can," etc., etc., on which I rather pique myself as being the truest, though the most melancholy, I ever wrote.

What a scrawl have I sent you! You say nothing of yourself, except that you are a Lancasterian churchwarden,¹ and an encourager of mendicants. When are you out? and how is your family? My child is very well and flourishing, I hear; but I must see also. I feel no disposition to resign it to the contagion of its grandmother's society, though I am unwilling to take it from the mother. It is weaned, however, and something about it must be decided.

Ever, etc.

65. To John Murray

April 2nd, 1816.

DEAR SIR,—I send back the Catalogue and the proof of the "Sketch."² I doubt about "*welter-ing*" but the dictionary should decide—look at it. We say "*weltering in blood*"—but do not they also use "*weltering in the wind*," "*welter-ing on a gibbet*"—there is no dictionary, so look or ask. In the meantime I have put "*fester-ing*" which perhaps in any case is the best word of the two—Shakespeare has it often and I do not think it too strong for the figure in this thing.

Yours, etc.,

B.

P.S.—Be quick.

¹ Moore had taken the chair at a dinner of the Lancasterian Society. Joseph Lancaster (1778–1838) established schools on unsectarian principles.

² The lines on Mrs. Clermont—"Born in the garret, in the kitchen bred." They were circulated among Byron's acquaintances together with the "Fare thee well" lines to Lady Byron. The poems found their way into the newspapers, and were the signal for a general attack upon Byron.

66. *To Lady Byron*¹

More last words—not many—and such as you will attend to ; answer I do not expect, nor does it import ; but you will at least hear me.—I have just parted from Augusta, almost the last being whom you have left me to part with.

Wherever I may go—and I am going far,—you and I can never meet in this world, nor in the next. Let this content or atone.— If any accident occurs to me, be kind to Augusta ; if she is then also nothing—to her children. You know that some time ago I made my will in her favour and her children, because any child of ours was provided for by other and better means. This could not be prejudice to you, for we had not then differed, and even now is useless during your life by the terms of our settlements. Therefore,—be kind to her, for never has she acted or spoken towards you but as your friend. And recollect, that, though it may be an advantage to you to have lost a husband, it is sorrow to her to have the waters now, or the earth hereafter, between her and her brother. It may occur to your memory that you formerly promised me this much. I repeat it—for deep resentments have but *half* recollections. Do not deem this promise cancell'd, for it was not a vow.

I have received from Mr. Wharton a letter containing one question and two pieces of intelligence. The carriage is yours, and, as it only carried us to Halnaby, and London, and you to Kirkby, it will yet convey you many a more propitious journey.

¹ This letter is printed from a copy made by Hobhouse endorsed, " Lord Byron's last letter to Lady B. on leaving England, " 1816, given to Mrs. Leigh by Mr. Hobhouse."

The receipts can remain, unless you find them troublesome ; if so, let them be sent to Augusta, through whom I would also receive occasional accounts of my child. My address will be left with Mrs. Leigh ; the ring is of no lapidary value, but it contains the hair of a King and of an ancestor, and I wish it to be preserved to Miss Byron.

With regard to a subsequent letter from Mr. Wharton I have to observe that it is the "law's "delay" ¹ not mine, and that, when the tenor of the bond is settled between him and Mr. H. I am ready to sign.

Yours truly,

BYRON.

67. *To the Hon. Augusta Leigh* ²

April 15th, 1816.

DEAREST A.,—Enclosed is a letter from George. *Who* is "Dr. Middleton," and what is all this about him, etc. ? G.'s affairs or mine ? . . . I trust you got home *safe* and are well. I am sadly without you, but I won't complain. I will write more soon.

Ever thine, dearest A., most truly,

B.

P.S.—I can't bear to send you a short letter, and my heart is too full for a long one : don't think me unkind, or ungrateful, dearest A., and tell me how is Georgey ³ and *Do*, ⁴ and you and *tip*, ⁵ and

¹ *Hamlet*, III, i, 72.

² Mrs. Leigh, who had been staying at Piccadilly Terrace since the previous December, left Byron on April 13, in expectation of her confinement, which occurred early in May.

³ Georgiana, her eldest daughter.

⁴ Perhaps a nickname for one of her two other children.

⁵ Her dog.

all the *tips* on four *legs* or *two* : ever and again, and for ever, thine.

68. To Isaac Nathan

PICCADILLY, Tuesday Evening.

MY DEAR NATHAN,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your very seasonable bequest,¹ which I duly appreciate ; the unleavened bread shall certainly accompany me in my pilgrimage ; and, with a full reliance on their efficacy, the *Motsas* shall be to me a charm against the destroying Angel wherever I may sojourn ; his serene highness, however, will, I hope, be polite enough to keep at a desirable distance from my person, without the necessity of besmearing my *door posts* or *upper lintels* with the blood of any animal. With many thanks for your kind attention, believe me, my dear Nathan,

Yours very truly,

BYRON.

69. To John Hanson

DOVER, April 24th, 1816.

DEAR SIR,—Denan has distrained on the effects left at the house in Piccadilly terrace for the half year's rent ;—I know not if this be lawful *without* a *previous action*. This *you* know best. If it be, there is one trunk of wood, with papers, letters,

¹ Nathan was with Byron at his house in Piccadilly during the last three days before he left London. Byron gave him a fifty-pound note ; and Nathan, after parting, sent Byron some Passover cakes with the following message :—" As a certain angel at a certain hour, by his presence, ensured the safety of " a whole nation, may the same guardian spirit pass with your " Lordship to that land where the fates may have decreed you " to sojourn for a while ! "

etc., also some *shoes*, and another thing or two, which I could wish redeemed from the wreck.

They have seized all the *servants' things*, Fletcher's and his wife's, etc. I hope you will see to these poor creatures having *their* property secured; as for *mine*, it must be sold. I wish Mr. Hobhouse to confer with you upon it.

Many thanks for your good wishes. I sail tonight for Ostend. My address had best be (for the present) A—Milord Byron—Poste Restante—à Genève.

V

SWITZERLAND AND EARLY DAYS IN ITALY

(1816-1818)

ON reaching Ostend, Byron made his way through Belgium, via Ghent and Antwerp, to Brussels. He was accompanied by Fletcher and Rushton, who had left England with him in 1809; a Swiss servant; and Dr. Polidori. He travelled in a large coach copied from Napoleon's, carrying a bed, kitchen, and library.

From Brussels he visited the field of Waterloo, and then proceeded to Geneva, where in June 1816 he took the Villa Diodati. At Geneva he met Shelley. In the autumn of the same year he made a tour of the Bernese Oberland with Hobhouse, and in October crossed the Simplon into Italy and reached Milan. Thence he went by Verona to Venice, where he was to stay three years.

He studied Armenian with Father Pasquale Aucher, of the St. Lazaro Convent, and helped him over the publication of an *English and Armenian Grammar*. His poetical activity continued. Before the end of 1816 he had published the Third Canto of *Childe Harold* (which, as well as the Fourth, is admittedly superior to Cantos I and II). A month later he published the *Prisoner of Chillon* (written

during two rainy days). By March 1817 he had completed *Manfred*, which had been inspired by the scenery of the Alps, and had been begun in Switzerland—"a Poem in Dialogue," he calls it, "of a very wild, metaphysical, and inexplicable kind." In July he has sent Murray 126 stanzas of Canto IV of *Childe Harold*, and in October *Beppo* is nearly finished.

70. *To the Hon. Augusta Leigh*

BRUXELLES, May 1st, 1816.

MY HEART,—We are detained here for some petty carriage repairs, having come out of our way to the Rhine on purpose, after passing through Ghent, Antwerp, and Mechlin. I have written to you twice,—once from Ostend, and again from Ghent. I hope most truly that you will receive my letters, not as important in themselves, but because you wish it and so do I. It would be difficult for me to write anything amusing; this country has been so frequently described, and has so little for description, though a good deal for observation, that I know not what to say of it, and one don't like talking only of oneself. We saw at Antwerp the famous basins of Bonaparte for his navy, which are very superb—as all his undertakings were, and as for churches, and pictures, I have stared at them till my brains are like a guide-book:—the last (though it is heresy to say so) don't please me at all. I think Rubens a very great dauber, and prefer Vandyke a hundred times over (but then I know nothing about the matter). Rubens' women have all red gowns and red shoulders—to say nothing of necks, of which they are more liberal than charming;

it may all be very fine, and I suppose it may be Art, for 'tis not Nature.

As the low Countries did not make part of my plan (except as a route), I feel a little anxious to get out of them. Level roads don't suit me, as thou knowest ; it must be up hill or down, and then I am more *au fait*. Imagine to yourself a succession of avenues with a Dutch Spire at the end of each, and you see the road ;—an accompaniment of highly cultivated farms on each side, intersected with small canals or ditches, and sprinkled with very neat and clean cottages, a village every two miles,—and you see the country ; not a rise from Ostend to Antwerp—a molehill would make the inhabitants think that the Alps had come here on a visit ; it is a perpetuity of plain and an eternity of *pavement* (on the *road*), but it is a country of great apparent comfort, and of singular though *tame* beauty, and, were it not out of my way, I should like to survey it less cursorily. The towns are wonderfully fine. The approach to Brussels is beautiful, and there is a fine palace to the right in coming.¹

71. To John Cam Hobhouse

BRUXELLES, May 1st, 1816.

MY DEAR H^e,—You will be surprised that we are not more “en avant,” and so am I, but Mr. Baxter's wheel and springs have not done their duty, for which I beg that you will abuse him like a pickpocket (that is—*He*—the said Baxter being the *pickpocket*) and say that I expect a deduction, having been obliged to come out of the way to this place, which was not in my route,

¹ The end of the letter is missing.

for repairs, which however I hope to have accomplished, so as to put us in motion in a day or two.

We passed through Ghent, Antwerp, and Mechlin, and thence diverged here, having seen all the sights, pictures, docks, basins, and having climbed up steeples, &c., &c., and so forth. The first thing, after the flatness and fertility of the country, which struck me, was the beauty of the towns, Bruges first, where, you may tell Douglas Kinnaird, on entering at sunset, I overtook a crew of beggarly looking gentlemen, not unlike Oxberry, headed by a monarch with a staff, the very fac-simile of King Clause in the said D. K.'s revived drama.¹

We lost our way in the dark, or rather twilight, not far from Ghent, by the stupidity of the postilion (*one* only, by the way, to four horses), which produced an alarm of intended robbery amongst the uninitiated, whom I could not convince that four or five well-armed people were not immediately to be plundered and anatomized by a single person, fortified with a horsewhip to be sure, but, nevertheless, a little encumbered with large jack boots, and a tight jacket that did not fit him.

The way was found again without loss of life or limb. I thought the learned Fletcher at least would have known better after our Turkish expeditions, and defiles and banditti, and guards, &c., &c., than to have been so valorously alert, without at least a better pretext for his superfluous courage.

I don't mean to say that they were frightened, but were vastly suspicious, without any cause.

At Ghent we stared at pictures; and climbed

¹ *The Merchant of Bruges.*

up a steeple, 450 steps in altitude, from which I had a good view and notion of these "paese bassi."

Next day we broke down, by a damned wheel (on which Baxter should be broken) pertinaciously refusing its stipulated rotation. This becalmed us at Lo-Kristy (2 leagues from Ghent) and obliged us to return for repairs; at Lo-Kristy I came to anchor in the house of a Flemish blacksmith (who was ill of a fever for which Dr. Dori¹ physicked him—I daresay he is dead by now), and saw somewhat of Lo-Kristy; Low-country low-life, which regaled me much; besides, it being a Sunday, all the world were on their way to mass, and I had the pleasure of seeing a number of very ordinary women in extraordinary garments:—we found the "Contadini," however, very good-natured and obliging, though not at all useful.

At Antwerp we pictured—churched—and steepled again, but the principal street and *bazon* pleased me most—poor dear Buonaparte!!! and the foundries, &c., &c. As for Rubens, I was glad to see his tomb on account of that ridiculous description (in Smollett's *P. Pickle*) of Pallet's absurdity at his monument—but as for his works, and his superb "tableaux," he seems to me (who by the way know nothing of the matter) the most glaring—flaring—staring—harlotry impostor that ever passed a trick upon the senses of mankind,—it is not nature—it is not art—with the exception of some linen (which hangs over the cross in one of his pictures) which, to do it justice, looked like a very handsome table-cloth—I never saw such an assemblage of florid nightmares as his canvas

¹ Polidori, Byron's travelling physician (who left his employment at Geneva).

contains ; his portraits seem clothed in pulpit cushions.

On the way to Mechlin, a wheel, and a *spring* too gave way ; that is, the one went, and the other would not go ; so we came off here to get into dock. I hope we shall sail shortly. On to Geneva.

Will you have the goodness to get at my account with Hoares ? I believe there must be a balance in my favour, as I did not draw a great deal previously to going :—whatever there may be, over the two thousand five hundred, they can send by you, to me in a further credit, when you come out.

I wish you to enquire (for fear any tricks might be played with my drafts)—*my* banker's books, left with you, will shew you exactly what I have drawn ; and you can let them have the book, to make out the remainder of the account.

All I have to urge to Hanson, or to our friend Douglas K.,¹ is to *sell*² if possible.

All kind things to Scrope and the rest.

Ever yrs. most truly and obligedly, B.

P.S.—If you hear of my child let me know any good of her health and well-doing.

72. To Samuel Rogers

DIODATI, NEAR GENEVA, July 29, 1816.

DEAR ROGERS,—Do you recollect a book, Mathisson's³ *Letters*, which you lent me, which I have still, and yet hope to return to your library ? Well, I have encountered at Copet and elsewhere Gray's correspondent (in its appendix) that same

¹ Kinnaird.

² Sc. Newstead.

³ Friedrich von Matthison (1761–1831).

Bonstetten,¹ to whom I lent the translation of his correspondent's epistles for a few days; but all he could remember of Gray amounts to little, except that he was the most "melancholy and gentlemanlike" of all possible poets. Bonstetten himself is a fine and very lively old man, and much esteemed by his compatriots; he is also a *littérateur* of good repute, and all his friends have a mania of addressing to him volumes of letters—Mathisson, Müller² the historian, etc., etc. He is a good deal at Copet, where I have met him a few times. All there are well, except Rocca,³ who, I am sorry to say, looks in a very bad state of health; the Duchess seems grown taller, but as yet no rounder since her marriage. Schlegel⁴ is in high force, and Madame⁵ as brilliant as ever.

I came here by the Netherlands and the Rhine route, and Basle, Berne, Morat, and Lausanne. I have circumnavigated the Lake, and shall go to Chamouni with the first fair weather; but really we have had lately such stupid mists, fogs, and perpetual density, that one would think Castlereagh had the Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Heaven also on his hands. I need say nothing to you of these parts, you having traversed them already. I do not think of Italy before September. I have read *Glenarvon*⁶—

"From furious Sappho scarce a milder fate,
——⁷ by her love or libelled by her hate—"

¹ Charles Victor de Bonstetten, who visited England in 1769.

² Johann von Müller, author of *History of the Helvetic Corporation*.

³ Madame de Staël's second husband.

⁴ August Wilhelm von Schlegel.

⁵ de Staël.

⁶ By Lady Caroline Lamb. See p. 76.

⁷ So written by Byron (Pope, *Imitations of Horace*, I, 84.—

"Pox'd by her love or libelled by her hate").

and have also seen Ben. Constant's *Adolphe*,¹ and his preface, denying the real people ; it is a work which leaves an unpleasant impression, but very consistent with the consequences of not being in love, which is, perhaps, as disagreeable as any thing, except being so. I doubt, however, whether all such *liens* (as he calls them) terminate so wretchedly as his hero and heroine's.

There is a third canto (a longer than either of the former) of *Childe Harold* finished, and some smaller things,—among them a story on the “Château de Chillon;”² I only wait a good opportunity to transmit them to the Grand Murray, who, I hope, flourishes. Where is Moore? Why an’t he out? My love to him, and my perfect consideration and remembrances to all, particularly to Lord and Lady Holland, and to your Duchess of Somerset.

Ever yours very truly, B.

P.S.—I send you a *fac-simile*, a note of Bonstetten's, thinking you might like to see the hand of Gray's correspondent.

The letter that follows alludes to Claire Clairmont's affair with Byron. Clara Mary Jane Clairmont was a step-daughter of William Godwin, and accompanied her step-sister, Mary Godwin, in her elopement with Shelley. At some date between Byron's separation from his wife and his departure for the continent, and when she was unknown to Byron, she wrote to him, confessing her love and begging for a private inter-

¹ Published in 1816.

² Byron's *Prisoner of Chillon, and Other Poems* was published in December 1816.

view. She followed this up by calling at his rooms, but found him out. She wrote further letters asking advice—first about what steps she should take to enter a theatrical career, and then, when he referred her to Kinnaird, about a novel she was writing. Eventually, in a letter in which she said “I do not expect you to love me; I am not worthy of it,” she suggested that they should leave town and spend a night together. In January 1817 she gave birth to a daughter, Allegra. In the previous summer she was with the Shelleys in Switzerland, and in 1818 she accompanied them to Italy. She outlived Byron fifty-five years. In Italy she had made the acquaintance of Trelawny, who kept up a life-long correspondence with her (see *Letters of Edward John Trelawny*, edited by H. Buxton Forman, 1910). She is supposed to be the prototype of “Stella” in Peacock’s *Nightmare Abbey*.

73. To the Hon. Augusta Leigh

DIODATI, GENEVA, *Sép^r*. 8th, 1816.

. . . I have been in some danger on the lake (near Meillerie), but nothing to speak of; and, as to all these “mistresses,” Lord help me—I have had but one. Now don’t scold; but what could I do?—a foolish girl, in spite of all I could say or do, would come after me, or rather went before—for I found her here—and I have had all the plague possible to persuade her to go back again; but at last she went. Now, dearest, I do most truly tell thee, that I could not help this, that I did all I could to prevent it, and have

at last put an end to it. I was not in love, nor have any love left for any ; but I could not exactly play the Stoic with a woman, who had scrambled eight hundred miles to unphilosophize me. Besides, I had been regaled of late with so many "two courses and a *desert*"¹ (Alas!) of aversion, that I was fain to take a little love (if pressed particularly) by way of novelty. And now you know all that I know of that matter, and it's over. Pray write. I have heard nothing since your last, at least a month or five weeks ago. I go out very little, except into the *air*, and on journeys, and on the water, and to Copet, where M^e de Staël has been particularly kind and friendly towards me and (I hear) fought battles without number in my very indifferent cause. It has (they say) made quite as much noise on this as the other side of *La Manche*. Heaven knows why—but I seem destined to set people by the ears.

Don't hate me, but believe me, ever yours most affectionately,

BYRON.

EXTRACTS FROM A JOURNAL (Sept. 1816)

CLARNES, Sept. 18th, 1816.

Yesterday September 17th 1816—I set out (with H.)² on an excursion of some days to the Mountains. I shall keep a short journal of each day's progress for my Sister Augusta.

Sept. 17th.

Rose at five ; left Diodati about seven, in one of the country carriages (a Charaban), our servants on horseback : weather very fine ; the Lake

¹ Cf. *She Stoops to Conquer*, II, ii.

² Hobhouse.

calm and clear; Mont Blanc and the Aiguille of Argentières both very distinct; the borders of the Lake beautiful. Reached Lausanne before Sunset; stopped and slept at Ouchy.

H. went to dine with a Mr. Okeden. I remained at our Caravansera (though invited to the house of H.'s friend—too lazy or tired, or something else, to go), and wrote a letter to Augusta. Went to bed at nine—sheets damp: swore and stripped them off and flung them—Heaven knows where: wrapt myself up in the blankets, and slept like a child of a month's existence till 5 o'Clock of

Sept. 18th.

Called by Berger (my Courier who acts as Valet for a day or two, the learned Fletcher being left in charge of Chattels at Diodati): got up. H. walked on before. A mile from Lausanne the road overflowed by the lake; got on horseback and rode till within a mile of Vevay. The Colt young, but went very well: overtook H., and resumed the carriage, which is an open one. Stopped at Vevay two hours (the *second* time I had visited it); walked to the church; view from the Churchyard superb; within it General Ludlow's (the Regicide's) monument—black marble—long inscription—Latin, but simple, particularly the latter part, in which his wife (Margaret de Thomas) records her long, her tried, and unshaken affection; he was an Exile *two and thirty years*—one of King's (Charles's) Judges—a fine fellow. I remember reading his memoirs in January 1815 (at Halnaby)—the first part of them very amusing, the latter less so; I little thought, at the time of their perusal by me, of seeing his tomb. Near him Broughton (who read

King Charles's sentence to Charles Stuart) is buried, with a queer and rather canting, but still a Republican, epitaph. Ludlow's house shown ; it retains still his inscription—*Omne Solum forti patria*. Walked down to the Lake side ; servants, Carriage, saddle horses—all set off and left us *plantés là*, by some mistake ; and we walked on after them towards Clarens : H. ran on before, and overtook them at last. Arrived the second time (1st time was by water) at Clarens, beautiful Clarens ! Went to Chillon through Scenery worthy of I know not whom ; went over the Castle of Chillon again. On our return met an English party in a carriage ; a lady in it fast asleep !—fast asleep in the most anti-narcotic spot in the world—excellent ! I remember, at Chamouni, in the very eyes of Mont Blanc, hearing another woman, English also, exclaim to her party “ did you ever see any thing more *rural* ? ” —as if it was Highgate, or Hampstead, or Brompton, or Hayes,—“ *Rural* ! ” quotha !—Rocks, pines, torrents, Glaciers, Clouds, and Summits of eternal snow far above them—and “ *Rural* ! ” I did not know the thus exclaiming fair one, but she was a very good kind of a woman.

After a slight and short dinner, we visited the Château de Clarens ; an English woman has rented it recently (it was not let when I saw it first) : the roses are gone with their Summer ; the family out, but the servants desired us to walk over the interior of the mansion. Saw on the table of the saloon Blair's sermons and somebody else's (I forget who's) sermons, and a set of noisy children. Saw all worth seeing, and then descended to the “ Bosquet de Julie,” etc., etc. ; our Guide full of *Rousseau*, whom he is eternally

confounding with *St. Preux*, and mixing the man and the book. On the steps of a cottage in the village, I saw a young *paysanne*, beautiful as Julie herself. Went again as far as Chillon to revisit the little torrent from the hill behind it. Sunset reflected in the lake. Have to get up at 5 tomorrow to cross the mountains on horseback—carriage to be sent round; lodged at my old Cottage—hospitable and comfortable; tired with a longish ride on the Colt, and the subsequent jolting of the Charaban, and my scramble in the hot sun. Shall go to bed, thinking of you, dearest Augusta.

.

[Sept. 19.]

The music of the Cows' bells (for their wealth, like the Patriarchs', is cattle) in the pastures, (which reach to a height far above any mountains in Britain), and the Shepherds shouting to us from crag to crag, and playing on their reeds where the steeps appeared almost inaccessible, with the surrounding scenery, realized all that I have ever heard or imagined of a pastoral existence:—much more so than Greece or Asia Minor, for there we are a little too much of the sabre and musquet order; and if there is a Crook in one hand, you are sure to see a gun in the other:—but this was pure and unmixed—solitary, savage, and patriarchal: the effect I cannot describe. As we went, they played the "*Ranz des Vaches*" and other airs, by way of farewell. I have lately repeopled my mind with Nature.

Sept. 24th.

Set out at seven; up at five. Passed the black Glacier, the Mountain Wetterhorn on the

right ; crossed the Scheideck mountain ; came to the *Rose* Glacier, said to be the largest and finest in Switzerland. *I* think the Bossons Glacier at Chamouni as fine ; *H.* does not. Came to the Reichenbach waterfall, two hundred feet high ; halted to rest the horses. Arrived in the valley of Oberhasli ; rain came on ; drenched a little ; only 4 hours' rain, however, in 8 days. Came to Lake of Brientz, then to town of Brientz ; changed. *H.* hurt his head against door. In the evening, four Swiss Peasant Girls of Oberhasli came and sang the airs of their country ; two of the voices beautiful—the tunes also : they sing too that *Tyrolese air* and song which you love, Augusta, because *I* love it—and *I* love, because you love it ; they are still singing. Dearest, you do not know how *I* should have liked this, were you with me. The airs are so wild and original, and at the same time of great sweetness. The singing is over : but below stairs *I* hear the notes of a Fiddle, which bode no good to my night's rest. The *Lard* help us—I shall go down and see the dancing.

.

Sept. 28th.

Saw the tree planted in honour of the battle of Morat ;¹ 340 years old ; a good deal decayed. Left Fribourg, but first saw the Cathedral ; high tower. Overtook the baggage of the Nuns of La Trappe, who are removing to Normandy from their late abode in the Canton of Fribourg ; afterwards a coach, with a quantity of Nuns in it—Nuns old. Proceeded along the banks of the Lake of Neufchatel ; very pleasing and soft,

¹ In which the Swiss defeated Charles the Bold in 1476.

but not so mountainous—at least, the Jura, not appearing so, after the Bernese Alps. Reached Yverdun in the dusk ; a long line of large trees on the border of the lake—fine and sombre : the Auberge nearly full—a German—with princess and suite ; got rooms.

We hope to reach Diodati the day after tomorrow, and I wish for a letter from you, my own dearest Sis. May your sleep be soft, and your dreams of me. I am going to bed—good night.

.

[Sept. 29.]

In the weather for this tour (of 13 days), I have been very fortunate—fortunate in a companion (Mr. He.)—fortunate in our prospects, and exempt from even the little petty accidents and delays which often render journeys in a less wild country disappointing. I was disposed to be pleased. I am a lover of Nature and an admirer of Beauty. I can bear fatigue and welcome privation, and have seen some of the noblest views in the world. But in all this—the recollections of bitterness, and more especially of recent and more home desolation, which must accompany me through life, have preyed upon me here ; and neither the music of the Shepherd, the crashing of the Avalanche, nor the torrent, the mountain, the Glacier, the Forest, nor the Cloud, have for one moment lightened the weight upon my heart, nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty, and the power, and the Glory, around, above, and beneath me.

I am past reproaches ; and there is a time for all things. I am past the wish of vengeance, and I know of none like for what I have suffered ;

but the hour will come, when what I feel must be felt, and the—but enough.

To you, dearest Augusta, I send, and *for* you I have kept this record of what I have seen and felt. Love me as you are beloved by me.

74. *To John Murray*

VENICE, December 27, 1816.

DEAR SIR,—As the Demon of silence seems to have possessed you, I am determined to have my revenge in postage. This is my sixth or seventh letter since summer and Switzerland. My last was an injunction to contradict and consign to confusion that Cheapside impostor,¹ who (I heard by a letter from your Island) had thought proper to append my name to his spurious poesy, of which I know nothing, nor of his pretended purchase or copyright. I hope you have, at least, received *that* letter.

As the news of Venice must be very interesting to you, I will regale you with it.

Yesterday being the feast of St. Stephen, every mouth was put in motion. There was nothing but fiddling and playing on the virginals, and all kinds of conceits and divertisements, on every canal of this aquatic city. I dined with the Countess Albrizzi and a Paduan and Venetian party, and afterwards went to the opera, at the Fenice theatre (which opens for the Carnival on that day)—the finest, by the way, I have ever seen; it beats *our* theatres hollow in beauty and scenery, and those of Milan and Brescia bow before it. The opera and its Syrens were much

¹ In November 1816 an injunction was granted restraining one James Johnston from publishing a spurious edition of Byron's works.

like all other operas and women, but the subject of the said opera was something edifying; it turned—the plot and conduct thereof—upon a fact narrated by Livy¹ of a hundred and fifty married ladies having *poisoned* a hundred and fifty husbands in the good old times. The bachelors of Rome believed this extraordinary mortality to be merely the common effect of matrimony or a pestilence; but the surviving Benedicts, being all seized with the cholic, examined into the matter, and found that “their possets had been drugged”;² the consequence of which was much scandal and several suits at law. This is really and truly the subject of the Musical piece at the Fenice; and you can’t conceive what pretty things are sung and recitativoed about the *horrenda strages*. The conclusion was a lady’s head about to be chopped off by a Lictor, but (I am sorry to say) he left it on, and she got up and sung a trio with the two Consuls, the Senate in the back-ground being chorus. The ballet was distinguished by nothing remarkable, except that the principal she-dancer went into convulsions because she was not applauded on her first appearance; and the manager came forward to ask if there was “ever a physician in the theatre.” There was a Greek one in my box, whom I wished very much to volunteer his services, being sure that in this case these would have been the last convulsions which would have troubled the *Ballerina*; but he would not. The crowd was enormous; and in coming out, having a lady under my arm, I was obliged, in making way, almost to “beat a Venetian and traduce the

¹ Book VIII, 18.

² *Macbeth*, II, ii, 7.

state,"¹ being compelled to regale a person with an English punch in the guts, which sent him as far back as the squeeze and the passage would admit. He did not ask for another ; but, with great signs of disapprobation and dismay, appealed to his compatriots, who laughed at him.

I am going on with my Armenian studies in a morning, and assisting and stimulating in the English portion of an English and Armenian grammar, now publishing at the Convent of St. Lazarus.

The Superior of the Friars is a bishop, and a fine old fellow, with the beard of a meteor. My spiritual preceptor, pastor and master, Father Paschal, is also a learned and pious soul : he was two years in England.

I am still dreadfully in love with the Adriatic lady² whom I spoke of in a former letter (and *not* in *this*—I add, for fear of mistakes ; for the only one mentioned in the first part of this epistle is elderly and bookish, two things which I have ceased to admire), and love in this part of the world is no sinecure. This is also the season when every body make up their intrigues for the ensuing year, and cut for partners for the next deal.

And now, if you don't write, I don't know what I won't say or do, nor what I will : send me some news—good news.

Yours very truly, etc., etc., etc. B.

P.S.—Remember me to Mr. Gifford with all duty.

I hear that the *Edinburgh Review* has cut up Coleridge's *Christabel*, and me for praising it, which omen, I think, bodes no great good to your forth-

¹ *Othello*, V, ii, 353.

² Marianna Segati.

come or coming Canto and Castle (of Chillon) : my run of luck within the last year seems to have taken a turn every way ; but never mind, I will bring myself through in the end—if not, I can but be where I began : in the mean time, I am not displeased to be where I am—I mean, at Venice. My Adriatic nymph is this moment here, and I must therefore repose from this letter, “rocked by the beating of her heart.”¹

75. To Thomas Moore

VENICE, January 28, 1817.

Your letter of the 8th is before me. The remedy for your plethora is simple—abstinence. I was obliged to have recourse to the like some years ago, I mean in point of *diet*, and, with the exception of some convivial weeks and days, (it might be months, now and then), have kept to Pythagoras ever since. For all this, let me hear that you are better. You must not *indulge* in “filthy beer,” nor in porter, nor eat *suppers*—the last are the devil to those who swallow dinner. * * * *

I am truly sorry to hear of your father’s misfortune²—cruel at any time, but doubly cruel in advanced life. However, you will, at least, have the satisfaction of doing your part by him, and, depend upon it, it will not be in vain. Fortune, to be sure, is a female, but not such a b * * as the rest (always excepting your wife and my sister from such sweeping terms) ; for she generally has some justice in the long run. I have no spite against her, though between her and

¹ Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, ll. 1185-6.

² Dismissal from his post of barrack-master in Dublin.

Nemesis I have had some sore gauntlets to run—but then I have done my best to deserve no better. But to *you*, she is a good deal in arrear, and she will come round—mind if she don't: you have the vigour of life, of independence, of talent, spirit, and character all with you. What you can do for yourself, you have done and will do; and surely there are some others in the world who would not be sorry to be of use, if you would allow them to be useful, or at least attempt it.

I think of being in England in the spring. If there is a row, by the sceptre of King Ludd, but I'll be one; and if there is none, and only a continuance of "this meek, piping time of peace,"¹ I will take a cottage a hundred yards to the south of your abode, and become your neighbour; and we will compose such canticles, and hold such dialogues, as shall be the terror of the *Times* (including the newspaper of that name), and the wonder, and honour, and praise, of the *Morning Chronicle* and posterity.

I rejoice to hear of your forthcoming in February—though I tremble for the "magnificence," which you attribute to the new *Childe Harold*.² I am glad you like it; it is a fine indistinct piece of poetical desolation, and my favourite. I was half mad during the time of its composition, between metaphysics, mountains, lakes, love unextinguishable, thoughts unutterable, and the nightmare of my own delinquencies. I should, many a good day, have blown my brains out, but for the recollection that it would have given

¹ *Richard III*, I, i, 24.

² Canto III was published in November 1816.

pleasure to my mother-in-law ; and, even *then*, if I could have been certain to haunt her —— but I won't dwell upon these trifling family matters.

Venice is in the *estro* of her carnival, and I have been up these last two nights at the ridotto¹ and the opera, and all that kind of thing. Now for an adventure. A few days ago a gondolier brought me a billet without a subscription, intimating a wish on the part of the writer to meet me either in gondola or at the island of San Lazaro, or at a third rendezvous, indicated in the note. "I know the country's disposition well"²—in Venice "they do let Heaven see those tricks they "dare not show," etc., etc. ; so, for all response, I said that neither of the three places suited me ; but that I would either be at home at ten at night *alone*, or be at the ridotto at midnight, where the writer might meet me masked. At ten o'clock I was at home and alone (Marianna was gone with her husband to a *conversazione*), when the door of my apartment opened, and in walked a well-looking and (for an Italian) *bionda* girl of about nineteen, who informed me that she was married to the brother of my *amorosa*, and wished to have some conversation with me. I made a decent reply, and we had some talk in Italian and Romaic (her mother being a Greek of Corfu), when lo ! in a very few minutes, in marches, to my very great astonishment, Marianna Segati, *in propria personâ*, and after making a most polite courtesy to her sister-in-law and to me, without a single word seizes her said sister-in-law by the hair, and bestows upon her some sixteen slaps, which

¹ Masquerade Ball.

² *Othello*, III, iii, 201.

would have made your ear ache only to hear their echo. I need not describe the screaming which ensued. The luckless visitor took flight. I seized Marianna, who, after several vain efforts to get away in pursuit of the enemy, fairly went into fits in my arms ; and, in spite of reasoning, eau de Cologne, vinegar, half a pint of water, and God knows what other waters beside, continued so till past midnight.

After damning my servants for letting people in without apprizing me, I found that Marianna in the morning had seen her sister-in-law's gondolier on the stairs, and, suspecting that his apparition boded her no good, had either returned of her own accord, or been followed by her maids or some other spy of her people to the conversazione, from whence she returned to perpetrate this piece of pugilism. I had seen fits before, and also some small scenery of the same genus in and out of our island : but this was not all. After about an hour, in comes—who ? why, Signor Segati, her lord and husband, and finds me with his wife fainting upon the sofa, and all the apparatus of confusion, dishevelled hair, hats, handkerchiefs, salts, smelling-bottles—and the lady as pale as ashes, without sense or motion. His first question was, “ What is all this ? ” The lady could not reply—so I did. I told him the explanation was the easiest thing in the world ; but in the mean time it would be as well to recover his wife—at least, her senses. This came about in due time of suspiration and respiration.

You need not be alarmed—jealousy is not the order of the day in Venice, and daggers are out of fashion ; while duels, on love matters, are unknown—at least, with the husbands. But,

for all this, it was an awkward affair ; and though he must have known that I made love to Marianna, yet I believe he was not, till that evening, aware of the extent to which it had gone. It is very well known that almost all the married women have a lover ; but it is usual to keep up the forms, as in other nations. I did not, therefore, know what the devil to say. I could not out with the truth, out of regard to her, and I did not choose to lie for my sake ;—besides, the thing told itself. I thought the best way would be to let her explain it as she chose (a woman being never at a loss—the devil always sticks by them)—only determining to protect and carry her off, in case of any ferocity on the part of the Signor. I saw that he was quite calm. She went to bed, and next day—how they settled it, I know not, but settle it they did. Well—then I had to explain to Marianna about this never-to-be-sufficiently-confounded sister-in-law ; which I did by swearing innocence, eternal constancy, etc., etc. * * * But the sister-in-law, very much discomposed with being treated in such wise, has (not having her own shame before her eyes) told the affair to half Venice, and the servants (who were summoned by the fight and the fainting) to the other half. But, here, nobody minds such trifles, except to be amused by them. I don't know whether you will be so, but I have scrawled a long letter out of these follies.

Believe me ever, etc.

76. *To Lady Byron*

VENICE, March 5th 1817.

A letter from Mr. Hanson apprizes me of the result of his correspondence with Sir Ralph Noel

(of which he has transmitted a copy), and of his interviews with Dr. Lushington on the subject of our daughter. I am also informed of a bill in Chancery filed against me last Spring by Sir Ralph Noel,¹ of which this is the first intimation and of the subject of which I am ignorant.

Whatever may be the result of these discussions and the measures, which have led to them, and to which they may lead, remember, that I have not been the first to begin; but, being begun, neither shall I be the first to recede. I feel at length convinced that the feeling which I had cherished through all and in spite of all, namely—the hope of a reconciliation and reunion, however remote,—is indubitably useless; and although, all things considered, it could not be very sanguine, still it was sincere, and I cherished it as a sickly infatuation: and now I part with it with a regret, perhaps bitterer than that which I felt in parting with yourself.

It was generally understood, if not expressed, that all legal proceedings were to terminate in the act of our separation; to what then I am to attribute the bill, of which I am apprized, I am at a loss to conjecture. The object, however, is evident: it is to deprive me of my paternal right over my child, which I have the less merited, as I neither abused nor intended to abuse it. You and yours might have been satisfied with the outrages I have already suffered, if not by your design, at least by your means. I know your defence and your apology—duty and Justice; but *Qui n'est que juste, est dur*: or if the French aphorism should seem light in the balance, I could

¹ By which Ada Byron was made a ward in Chancery.

refer you to an older language and a higher authority for the condemnation of conduct, which you may yet live to condemn in your own heart.

Throughout the whole of this unhappy business, I have done my best to avoid the bitterness, which, however, is yet amongst us ; and it would be as well if even you at times recollected, that the man who has been sacrificed in fame, in feelings, in every thing, to the convenience of your family, was he whom you once loved, and who—whatever you may imagine to the contrary—loved you. If you conceive that I could be actuated by revenge against you, you are mistaken : I am not humble enough to be vindictive. Irritated I may have been, and may be—is it a wonder ? but upon such irritation, beyond its momentary expression, I have not acted, from the hour that you quitted me to that in which I am made aware that our daughter is to be the entail of our disunion, the inheritor of our bitterness. If you think to reconcile yourself to yourself by accumulating harshness against me, you are again mistaken : you are not happy, nor even tranquil, nor will you ever be so, even to the very moderate degree which is permitted to general humanity. For myself, I have a confidence in my Fortune, which will yet bear me through. Ταῦτόματον ἡμῶν κάλλιον βουλεύεται.¹ The reverses, which have occurred, were what I should have expected ; and, in considering you and yours merely as the instruments of my more recent adversity, it would be difficult for me to blame you, did not every thing appear to intimate a deliberate inten-

¹ The passage must be corrupt, but the words as they stand might mean " chance arranges things better than we do."

tion of as wilful malice on your part as could well be digested into a system. However, time and Nemesis will do that, which I would not, even were it in my power remote or immediate. You will smile at this piece of prophecy—do so, but recollect it: it is justified by all human experience. No one was ever even the involuntary cause of great evils to others, without a requital: I have paid and am paying for mine—so will you.

77. *To John Murray*

VENICE, April 14, 1817.

DEAR SIR,—By the favour of Dr. Polidori, who is here on his way to England with the present Lord Guilford, (the late Earl having gone to England by another road, accompanied by his bowels in a separate coffer,) I remit to you, to deliver to Mrs. Leigh, *two miniatures*; but previously you will have the goodness to desire Mr. Love¹ (as a peace-offering between him and me) to set them in plain gold, with my arms complete, and “Painted by Prepiani—Venice, 1817,” on the back. I wish also that you would desire Holmes to make a copy of *each*—that is, both—for myself, and that you will retain the said copies till my return. One was done while I was very unwell; the other in my health, which may account for their dissimilitude. I trust that they will reach their destination in safety.

I recommend the Doctor to your good offices with your Government friends; and if you can be of any use to him in a literary point of view, pray be so.

To-day, or rather yesterday, for it is past mid-

¹ A Bond Street jeweller. There had been some question about a silver-plated box he had bought from Byron.

night, I have been up to the battlements of the highest tower in Venice, and seen it and its view, in all the glory of a clear Italian sky. I also went over the Manfrini Palace, famous for its pictures. Amongst them, there is a portrait of *Ariosto* by *Titian*, surpassing all my anticipation of the power of painting or human expression : it is the poetry of portrait, and the portrait of poetry. There was also one of some learned lady, centuries old, whose name I forget, but whose features must always be remembered. I never saw greater beauty, or sweetness, or wisdom :—it is the kind of face to go mad for, because it cannot walk out of its frame. There is also a famous dead Christ and live apostles, for which Buonaparte offered in vain five thousand Louis ; and of which, though it is a *capo d'opera* of Titian, as I am no connoisseur, I say little, and thought less, except of one figure in it. There are ten thousand others, and some very fine Giorgiones amongst them, etc., etc. There is an original Laura and Petrarch, very hideous both. Petrarch has not only the dress, but the features and air of an old woman, and Laura looks by no means like a young one, or a pretty one. What struck me most in the general collection was the extreme resemblance of the style of the female faces in the mass of pictures, so many centuries or generations old, to those you see and meet every day amongst the existing Italians. The queen of Cyprus¹ and Giorgione's wife, particularly the latter, are Venetians as it were of yesterday ; the same eyes and expression, and, to my mind, there is none finer.

¹ Catherine Cornaro (who abdicated in 1489).

You must recollect, however, that I know nothing of painting; and that I detest it, unless it reminds me of something I have seen, or think it possible to see, for which reason I spit upon and abhor all the Saints and subjects of one half the impostures I see in the churches and palaces; and when in Flanders, I never was so disgusted in my life as with Rubens and his eternal wives and infernal glare of colours, as they appeared to me; and in Spain I did not think much of Murillo and Velasquez. Depend upon it, of all the arts, it is the most artificial and unnatural, and that by which the nonsense of mankind is the most imposed upon. I never yet saw the picture—or the statue—which came within a league of my conception or expectation; but I have seen many mountains, and Seas, and Rivers, and views, and two or three women, who went as far beyond it,—besides some horses; and a lion (at Veli Pasha's) in the Morea; and a tiger at supper in Exeter 'Change.

When you write, continue to address to me at *Venice*. Where do you suppose the books you sent to me are? At *Turin*! This comes of "*the foreign office*," which is foreign enough, God knows, for any good it can be of to me, or any one else, and be damned to it, to its last Clerk and first Charlatan, Castlereagh.

This makes my hundredth letter at least.

Yours ever and truly,

B.

78. To Thomas Moore

ROME, May 12, 1817.

I have received your letter here, where I have taken a cruise lately; but I shall return back to

Venice in a few days, so that if you write again, address there, as usual. I am not for returning to England so soon as you imagine ; and by no means at all as a residence. If you cross the Alps in your projected expedition, you will find me somewhere in Lombardy, and very glad to see you. Only give me a word or two beforehand, for I would readily diverge some leagues to meet you.

Of Rome I say nothing ; it is quite indescribable, and the Guide-book is as good as any other. I dined yesterday with Lord Lansdowne, who is on his return. But there are few English here at present ; the winter is *their* time. I have been on horseback most of the day, all days since my arrival, and have taken it as I did Constantinople. But Rome is the elder sister, and the finer. I went some days ago to the top of the Alban Mount, which is superb. As for the Coliseum, Pantheon, St. Peter's, the Vatican, Palatine, etc., etc.—as I said, *vide* Guide-book. They are quite inconceivable, and must *be seen*. The Apollo Belvidere is the image of Lady Adelaide Forbes—I think I never saw such a likeness.

I have seen the Pope¹ alive, and a cardinal dead,—both of whom looked very well indeed. The latter was in state in the Chiesa Nuova, previous to his interment.

Your poetical alarms are groundless ; go on and prosper. Here is Hobhouse just come in, and my horses at the door ; so that I must mount and take the field in the Campus Martius, which, by the way, is all built over by modern Rome.

Yours very and ever, etc.

¹ Pius VII

P.S.—Hobhouse presents his remembrances, and is eager, with all the world, for your new poem.

79. *To the Hon. Augusta Leigh*

FLORENCE, May 27th, 1817.

MY DEAREST AUGUSTA,—I am thus far on my return from Rome to Venice. From Rome I wrote to you at some length. Hobhouse is gone to Naples for a short time.

I received a letter or two from you during my stay—one old, and one new. My health is re-established, and has continued so through some very warm weather, and a good deal of horse and mountain exercise and scrambling; for I lived out of doors ever since my arrival.

I shall be glad to hear from or of you, and of your children and mine. By the way, it seems that I have got another—a *daughter*¹ by that same lady, whom you will recognize by what I said of her in former letters—I mean *her* who returned to England to become a Mamma incog., and whom I pray the Gods to keep there. I am a little puzzled how to dispose of this new production (which is two or three months old, though I did not receive the accounts till at Rome), but shall probably send for and place it in a Venetian convent, to become a good Catholic, and (it may be) a *Nun*, being a character somewhat wanted in our family.

They tell me it is very pretty, with blue eyes and *dark* hair; and, although I never was attached nor pretended attachment to the mother, still in case of the eternal war and alienation which I

¹ Allegra, Claire Clairmont's child.

foresee about my legitimate daughter, Ada, it may be as well to have something to repose a hope upon. I must love something in my old age, and probably circumstances will render this poor little creature a great and, perhaps, my only comfort.¹

80. To John Murray

LA MIRA, NEAR VENICE, July 1, 1817.

DEAR SIR,—Since my former letter, I have been working up my impressions into a 4th Canto of *Childe Harold*, of which I have roughened off about rather better than thirty stanzas, and mean to go on; and probably to make this “Fytte” the concluding one of the poem, so that you may propose against the Autumn to draw out the Conscription for 1818. You must provide monies, as this new resumption bodes you certain disbursements; somewhere about the end of September or October, I propose to be under way (*i.e.* in the press); but I have no idea yet of the probable length or calibre of the canto, or what it will be good for; but I mean to be as mercenary as possible, an example (I do not mean of any individual in particular, and least of all any person or persons of our mutual acquaintance) which I should have followed in my youth, and I might still have been a prosperous gentleman.

No tooth-powder, no packet of letters, no recent tidings of you.

Mr. Lewis² is at Venice, and I am going up to stay a week with him there—as it is one of his enthusiasms also to like the city.

¹ The end of the letter is missing.

² Matthew Gregory (“Monk”) Lewis, author of *The Monk* and many other tales and dramas.

I stood in Venice, on the " Bridge of Sighs " ;
 A palace and a prison on each hand :
 I saw from out the wave her structures rise
 As from the stroke of { an } Enchanter's wand :
 { the }
 A thousand Years their cloudy wings expand
 Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
 O'er the far times when many a subject land
 Looked to the winged Lion's marble piles,
 Where Venice sate in state, throned on her Seventy Isles.

The " Bridge of Sighs " (*i.e.* *Ponte dei sospiri*) is that which divides, or rather joins, the palace of the Doge to the prison of the state. It has two passages: the criminal went by the one to judgement, and returned by the other to death, being strangled in a chamber adjoining, where there was a mechanical process for the purpose.

This is the first stanza of the new canto; and now for a line of the second:—

In Venice, Tasso's echo is no more,
 And silent rows the songless gondolier,
 Her palaces, etc., etc.

You know that formerly the gondoliers sang always, and Tasso's *Gerusalemme* was their ballad. Venice is built on seventy-two islands.

There! there's a brick of your new Babel! and now, sirrah! what say you to the sample?

Yours most sincerely, B^N.

P.S.—I shall write again by and bye.

81. *To John Murray*

September 15, 1817.

DEAR SIR,—I enclose a sheet for correction, if ever you get to another edition. You will observe that the blunder in printing makes it appear as if the Château was *over* St. Gingo,¹

¹ See *The Prisoner of Chillon*, stanzas VI, l. 9.

instead of being on the opposite shore of the Lake, over Clarens. So, separate the paragraphs, otherwise my *topography* will seem as inaccurate as your *typography* on this occasion.

The other day I wrote to convey my proposition with regard to the 4th and concluding canto. I have gone over and extended it to one hundred and fifty stanzas, which is almost as long as the two first were originally, and longer by itself than any of the smaller poems except *The Corsair*. Mr. Hobhouse has made some very valuable and accurate notes of considerable length, and you may be sure I will do for the text all that I can to finish with decency. I look upon *Childe Harold* as my best; and as I begun, I think of concluding with it. But I make no resolutions on that head, as I broke my former intention with regard to *The Corsair*. However, I fear that I shall never do better; and yet, not being thirty years of age, for some moons to come, one ought to be progressive as far as Intellect goes for many a good year. But I have had a devilish deal of wear and tear of mind and body in my time, besides having published too often and much already. God grant me some judgement! to do what may be most fitting in that and every thing else, for I doubt my own exceedingly.

I have read *Lallah Rookh*, but not with sufficient attention yet, for I ride about, and lounge, and ponder, and—two or three other things; so that my reading is very desultory, and not so attentive as it used to be. I am very glad to hear of its popularity, for Moore is a very noble fellow in all respects, and will enjoy it without any of the bad feeling which success—good or evil—sometimes engenders in the men of rhyme. Of the

poem itself, I will tell you my opinion when I have mastered it: I say of the *poem*, for I don't like the *prose* at all—at all; and in the mean time, the "Fire worshippers" is the best, and the "Veiled Prophet" the worst, of the volume.

With regard to poetry in general, I am convinced, the more I think of it, that he and *all* of us—Scott, Southey, Wordsworth, Moore, Campbell, I,—are all in the wrong, one as much as another; that we are upon a wrong revolutionary poetical system, or systems, not worth a damn in itself, and from which none but Rogers and Crabbe are free; and that the present and next generations will finally be of this opinion. I am the more confirmed in this by having lately gone over some of our classics, particularly *Pope*, whom I tried in this way,—I took Moore's poems and my own and some others, and went over them side by side with Pope's, and I was really astonished (I ought not to have been so) and mortified at the ineffable distance in point of sense, harmony, effect, and even *Imagination*, passion, and *Invention*, between the little Queen Anne's man, and us of the Lower Empire. Depend upon it, it is all Horace then, and Claudian now, among us; and if I had to begin again, I would model myself accordingly. Crabbe's the man, but he has got a coarse and impracticable subject, and Rogers, the Grandfather of living Poetry, is retired upon half-pay, (I don't mean as a Banker¹),—

Since pretty Miss Jaqueline,²

With her nose aquiline,

and has done enough, unless he were to do as he did formerly.

¹ Samuel Rogers had been a banker.

² See p. 121.

82. *To John Cam Hobhouse*¹VENICE, *June*, 1818.

SIR,—With great grief I inform you of the death of my late dear Master, my Lord, who died this morning at ten of the Clock of a rapid decline and slow fever, caused by anxiety, sea-bathing, women, and riding in the Sun against my advice.

He is a dreadful loss to every body, mostly to me, who have lost a master and a place—also, I hope you, Sir, will give me a charakter.

I saved in his service as you know several hundred pounds. God knows how, for I don't, nor my late master neither ; and if my wage was not always paid to the day, still it was or is to be paid sometime and somehow. You, Sir, who are his executioner won't see a poor Servant wronged of his little all.

My dear Master had several phisicians and a Priest : he died a Papish, but is to be buried among the Jews in the Jewish burying ground ; for my part I don't see why—he could not abide them when living nor any other people, hating whores who asked him for money.

He suffered his illness with great patience, except that when in extremity he twice damned his friends and said they were selfish rascals—you, Sir, particularly and Mr. Kinnaird, who had never answered his letters nor complied with his repeated requests. He also said he hoped that your new tragedy would be damned—God forgive him—I hope that my master won't be damned like the tragedy.

His nine whores are already provided for, and the other servants ; but what is to become of

¹ This letter purports to be from Byron's valet, Fletcher.

me? I have got his Cloathes and Carriages, and Cash, and everything; but the Consul quite against law has clapt his seal and taken an inventory and swears that *he* must account to my Lord's heirs—who they are, I don't know—but they ought to consider poor Servants and above all his Vally de Sham.

My Lord never grudged me perquisites—my wage was the least I got by him; and if I did keep the Countess (she is, or ought to be, a Countess, although she is upon the town) Marietta Monetta Piretta, after passing my word to you and my Lord that I would not never no more—still he was an indulgent master, and only said I was a damned fool, and swore and forgot it again. What could I do? she said as how she should die, or kill herself if I did not go with her, and so I did—and kept her out of my Lord's washing and ironing—and nobody can deny that, although the charge was high, the linen was well got up.

Hope you are well, Sir—am, with tears in my eyes,

Yours faithfoolly to command, W^m FLETCHER.

P.S.—If you know any Gentleman in want of a Wally—hope for a charakter. I saw your late Swiss Servant in the Galleys at Leghorn for robbing an Inn—he produced your recommendation at his trial.

VI

VENICE, PISA, AND GENOA

(1819-1823)

THE period covered by the letters in this section is significant, as regards Byron's private life, for the beginning and development of his association with the Countess Guiccioli, which lasted, for six years, to his death.

Teresa, daughter of Count Gamba of Ravenna, had been married only a few months to Count Guiccioli, a rich landowner, forty years older than herself, when in April 1819 Byron was introduced to her. She has left a description of the effect made on her. "His noble and exquisitely beautiful countenance, the tone of his voice, his manners, the thousand enchantments that surrounded him, rendered him so different and so superior a being to any whom I had hitherto seen, that it was impossible he should not have left the most profound impression upon me. From that evening, during the whole of my subsequent stay at Venice, we met every day."

On the departure of the Guicciolis from Venice, Byron followed them—first to Verona, and then to Bologna. At Bologna the Count, after asking Byron to try to secure him a Vice-Consulate, left them, and Byron and the Countess moved to Byron's villa near Venice. While there, Byron received a request from the Count for a loan of

£1,000, which he refused. Shortly after, the Count demanded that his wife should give up Byron, and return to him. She was sacrificing wealth, social position, and reputation; and Byron advised her to accept the conditions. She returned to her husband at Ravenna. But there she fell ill, and at the urgent request of her father, and with the acquiescence of her husband, Byron rejoined her, and he rented the Palazzo Guiccioli from the Count. Later, however—when the Palazzo had become a centre of political revolution—the Count again demanded that his wife should give up Byron. This time the Countess definitely refused, and she applied for a separation from her husband, which was granted by Papal Decree. Byron continued to live with her at Venice, and afterwards at Pisa and Genoa, until his departure for Greece.

Some time after Byron's death the Countess Guiccioli paid a visit to England. Many years later when she was about fifty (the exact date is uncertain) she married, as her second husband, the Marquis de Boissy, and lived in Paris until his death in 1866, when she returned to Florence. She wrote a book on Byron which was published in an English translation under the title *My Recollections of Lord Byron*. She died in 1873.

Mary Shelley described Teresa Guiccioli as a "Nice, pretty girl, without pretensions, good-hearted, and amiable." Lady Blessington says of her in 1828—"Her manners are remarkably distinguished, and her conversation is *spirituelle* and interesting. Her face is decidedly hand-

“some; her bust and arms are exquisitely beautiful. She speaks her native language with remarkable purity, French with great fluency, and understands English perfectly. Her reading has been extensive.” “Her conduct towards me,” said Byron, “has been faultless, and there are few examples of such complete and disinterested affection as she has shown towards me all through our attachment.” When Byron went to Greece she declined to accept any money from him, and also to be provided for in his will. Nor is there any doubt of her good influence on him. “L.B.,” writes Shelley to his wife, in 1821, “is greatly improved in every respect. In genius, temper, in moral views, in health, in happiness. The connexion with La Guiccioli has been an inestimable benefit to him.”

Byron's rate of composition during this period was extraordinary. Between February 1820 and January 1822, besides a translation of Pulci's *Morgante Maggiore*, two pamphlets on Pope, and *Francesca of Rimini*, he wrote his first drama, *Marino Faliero*, and five others (*Sardanapalus*, *The Two Foscari*, *Cain*, *The Deformed Transformed*, *Werner*), and five cantos of *Don Juan*.

His political interests were also active. Italy was seething with the Carbonaro conspiracies; the walls of Ravenna were placarded with “Up with the Republic,” “Death to the Pope”; and the Gambas were Liberals, and introduced Byron to the secret societies. He became head of the *Americani*, a section of the *Carbonari*;

bought arms for them ; and offered a thousand guineas to the constitutional government in Naples. But an advance of the Austrian troops caused a collapse of the whole scheme. The Gambas were banished ; the Countess Guiccioli fled ; and Byron eventually joined them all at Pisa.

83. *To Douglas Kinnaird*

VENICE, April 24, 1819.

DEAR DOUGLAS,—Damn "*the Vampire*." ¹ What do I know of Vampires ? It must be some bookselling imposture ; contradict it in a solemn paragraph.

I sent off on April 3rd the 2nd canto of "Don Juan" addressed to Murray, I hope it is arrived—by the Lord it is a Capo d'Opera, so "full of pastime and prodigality," but you shan't decimate or mutilate, no—"rather than that, come critics into the list, and champion me to the uttermost."

Nor you, nor that rugged rhinoceros Murray, have ever told me, in answer to *fifty* times the question, if he ever received the additions to Canto *first*, entitled "Julia's letter" and also some four stanzas for the beginning.

I have fallen in love, within the last month, with a Romagnuola Countess from Ravenna, the spouse of a year of Count Guiccioli, who is sixty—the girl twenty.

She is as fair as sunrise, and warm as noon, but she is young, and was not content with what she had done, unless it was to be turned to the advantage of the public, and so she made an *éclat*,

¹ A tale by Dr. Polidori, attributed to Byron.

which rather astonished even the Venetians, and electrified the *Conversazioni* of the Benzona, the Albrizzi, and the Michelli, and made her husband look embarrassed.

They have been gone back to Ravenna some time, but they return in the winter. She is the queerest woman I ever met with, for in general they cost one something one way or other, whereas by an odd combination of circumstances, I have proved an expense to HER, which is not *my* custom, but an accident ; however it don't matter.

She is a sort of Italian Caroline Lamb, except that she is much prettier, and not so savage. But she has the same red-hot head, the same noble disdain of public opinion, with the superstructure of all that Italy can add to such natural dispositions.

She is also of the Ravenna noblesse, educated in a convent, sacrificed to wealth, filial duty, and all that.

I am damnably in love, but they are gone, for many months—and nothing but hope keeps me alive *seriously*.

Yours ever,

B.

84. To John Murray

BOLOGNA, June 7, 1819.

DEAR SIR,—Tell Mr. Hobhouse that I wrote to him a few days ago from Ferrara. It will therefore be idle in him or you to wait for any further answers or returns of proofs from Venice, as I have directed that no English letters be sent after me. The publication can be proceeded in without, and I am already sick of your remarks, to

which I think not the least attention ought to be paid.

Tell Mr. Hobhouse that, since I wrote to him, I had availed myself of my Ferrara letters, and found the society much younger and better there than at Venice. I was very much pleased with the little the shortness of my stay permitted me to see of the Gonfaloniere Count Mosti, and his family and friends in general.

I have been picture-gazing this morning at the famous Domenichino and Guido, both of which are superlative. I afterwards went to the beautiful Cemetery of Bologna, beyond the walls, and found, besides the superb Burial-ground, an original of a *Custode*, who reminded me of the grave-digger in Hamlet. He has a collection of Capuchins' skulls, labelled on the forehead, and taking down one of them, said "This was Brother Desiderio Berro, who died at forty—one of my best friends. I begged his head of his brethren after his decease, and they gave it me. I put it in lime and then boiled it. Here it is, teeth and all, in excellent preservation. He was the merriest, cleverest fellow I ever knew. Wherever he went, he brought joy; and when any one was melancholy, the sight of him was enough to make him cheerful again. He walked so actively, you might have taken him for a dancer—he joked—he laughed—oh! he was such a Frate as I never saw before, nor ever shall again!"

He told me that he had himself planted all the Cypresses in the Cemetery; that he had the greatest attachment to them and to his dead people; that since 1801 they had buried fifty-three thousand persons. In showing some older

monuments, there was that of a Roman girl of twenty, with a bust by Bernini.¹ She was a Princess Barberini, dead two centuries ago: he said that on opening her grave, they had found her hair complete, and "as yellow as gold." Some of the epitaphs at Ferrara pleased me more than the more splendid monuments of Bologna; for instance:—

"Martini Luigi
Implora pace."

"Lucrezia Picini
Implora eterna quiete."

Can any thing be more full of pathos? Those few words say all that can be said or sought: the dead had had enough of life; all they wanted was rest, and this they "*implore*." There is all the helplessness, and humble hope, and deathlike prayer, that can arise from the grave—"implora pace." I hope, whoever may survive me, and shall see me put in the foreigners' burying-ground at the Lido, within the fortress by the Adriatic, will see those two words, and no more, put over me. I trust they won't think of "pickling, and bringing me "home to Clod or Blunderbuss Hall."² I am sure my bones would not rest in an English grave, or my clay mix with the earth of that country. I believe the thought would drive me mad on my deathbed, could I suppose that any of my friends would be base enough to convey my carcase back to your soil. I would not even feed your worms, if I could help it.

So, as Shakespeare says of Mowbray, the banished Duke of Norfolk, who died at Venice (see Richard II.),³ that he, after fighting

¹ 1598-1680.

² *The Rivals*, V, iii.

³ *Richard II*, IV, i, 95-100.

“ Against black pagans, Turks, and Saracens,
And toil'd with works of war, retir'd himself
To Italy ; and there, at *Venice*, gave
His body to that *pleasant* country's earth,
And his pure soul unto his Captain Christ,
Under whose colours he had fought so long.”

Before I left Venice, I had returned to you your late, and Mr. Hobhouse's, sheets of *Juan*. Don't wait for further answers from me, but address yours to Venice, as usual. I know nothing of my own movements ; I may return there in a few days, or not for some time. All this depends on circumstances. I left Mr. Hoppner¹ very well, as well as his son and Mrs. Hoppner. My daughter Allegra was well too and is growing pretty ; her hair is growing darker, and her eyes are blue. Her temper and her ways, Mr. Hoppner says, are like mine, as well as her features : she will make, in that case, a manageable young lady.

I never hear any thing of Ada, the little Electra of my Mycenæ ; the moral Clytemnestra is not very communicative of her tidings, but there will come a day of reckoning, even if I should not live to see it.

I have at least seen Romilly² shivered who was one of the assassins. When that felon, or lunatic (take your choice, he must be one and might be both), was doing his worst to uproot my whole family tree, branch, and blossoms ; when, after taking my retainer, he went over to them ; when he was bringing desolation on my hearth and destruction on my household Gods, did he think that, in less than three years, a natural event—a severe domestic—but an expected and common domestic calamity,—would

¹ See p. 218.

² See p. 102. He committed suicide on the death of his wife

lay his carcase in a cross road, or stamp his name in a verdict of Lunacy? Did he (who in his drivelling sexagenary dotage had not the courage to survive his Nurse—for what else was a wife to him at his time of life?)—reflect or consider what my feelings must have been, when wife, and child, and sister, and name, and fame, and country were to be my sacrifice on his legal altar—and this at a moment when my health was declining, my fortune embarrassed, and my mind had been shaken by many kinds of disappointment, while I was yet young and might have reformed what might be wrong in my conduct, and retrieved what was perplexing in my affairs. But the wretch is in his grave. I detested him living, and I will not affect to pity him dead; I still loathe him—as much as we can hate dust—but that is nothing.

What a long letter I have scribbled!

Yours truly,

B.

85. To John Murray

BOLOGNA, August 12, 1819.

DEAR SIR,—I do not know how far I may be able to reply to your letter, for I am not very well to-day. Last night I went to the representation of Alfieri's *Mirra*, the two last acts of which threw me into convulsions. I do not mean by that word a lady's hysterics, but the agony of reluctant tears, and the choaking shudder, which I do not often undergo for fiction. This is but the second time for anything under reality; the first was on seeing Kean's Sir Giles Overreach.¹ The worst was, that the "*dama*," in whose box

¹ In Massinger's *New Way to Pay Old Debts*.

I was, went off in the same way, I really believe more from fright than any other sympathy—at least with the players: but she has been ill, and I have been ill, and we are all languid and pathetic this morning, with great expenditure of Sal Volatile. But, to return to your letter of the 23d of July.

You are right, Gifford is right, Crabbe is right, Hobhouse is right—you are all right, and I am all wrong; but do, pray, let me have that pleasure. Cut me up root and branch; quarter me in the *Quarterly*; send round my *disjecti membra poetæ*, like those of the Levite's Concubine;¹ make me, if you will, a spectacle to men and angels; but don't ask me to alter, for I can't:—I am obstinate and lazy—and there's the truth.

But, nevertheless, I will answer your friend Cohen,² who objects to the quick succession of fun and gravity, as if in that case the gravity did not (in intention, at least) heighten the fun. His metaphor is, that "we are never scorched and "drenched at the same time." Blessings on his experience! Ask him these questions about "scorching and drenching." Did he never play at Cricket, or walk a mile in hot weather? Did he never spill a dish of tea over himself in handing the cup to his charmer, to the great shame of his nankeen breeches? Did he never swim in the sea at Noonday with the Sun in his eyes and on his head, which all the foam of Ocean could not cool? Did he never draw his foot out of a tub of too hot water, damning his eyes and his valet's?

¹ *Judges*, xix, 29.

² Francis Cohen, historian, afterwards assumed the name of Palgrave; was knighted; and became Deputy Keeper of Her Majesty's Records.

***** Was he ever in a Turkish bath, that marble paradise of sherbet and Sodomy? Was he ever in a cauldron of boiling oil, like St. John? or in the sulphureous waves of hell? (where he ought to be for his "scorching and drenching at "the same time"). Did he never tumble into a river or lake, fishing, and sit in his wet cloathes in the boat, or on the bank, afterwards "scorched "and drenched," like a true sportsman? "Oh "for breath to utter!"¹—but make him my compliments; he is a clever fellow for all that—a very clever fellow.

You ask me for the plan of Donny Johnny: I *have* no plan—I *had* no plan; but I had or have materials; though if, like Tony Lumpkin,² I am "to be snubbed so when I am in spirits," the poem will be naught, and the poet turn serious again. If it don't take, I will leave it off where it is, with all due respect to the Public; but if continued, it must be in my own way. You might as well make Hamlet (or Diggory)³ "act "mad" in a strait waistcoat as trammel my buffoonery, if I am to be a buffoon: their gestures and my thoughts would only be pitiably absurd and ludicrously constrained. Why, Man, the Soul of such writing is its licence; at least the *liberty* of that *licence*, if one likes—not that one should abuse it: it is like trial by Jury and Peerage and the Habeas Corpus—a very fine thing, but chiefly in the *reversion*; because no one wishes to be tried for the mere pleasure of proving his possession of the privilege.

But a truce with these reflections. You are

¹ *Henry IV*, First Part, II, iv, 248.

² *She Stoops to Conquer*, II.

³ Jackman, *All the World's a Stage*. . .

too earnest and eager about a work never intended to be serious. Do you suppose that I could have any intention but to giggle and make giggle?—a playful satire, with as little poetry as could be helped, was what I meant: and as to the indecency, do, pray, read in Boswell what *Johnson*, the sullen moralist, says of *Prior* and *Paulo Purgante*.¹

Will you get a favour done for me? You can, by your Government friends, Croker, Caning, or my old Schoolfellow Peel, and I can't. Here it is. Will you ask them to appoint (*without salary or emolument*) a noble Italian² (whom I will name afterwards) Consul or Vice-Consul for Ravenna? He is a man of very large property,—noble, too; but he wishes to have a British protection, in case of changes. Ravenna is near the sea. He wants *no emolument* whatever: that his office might be useful, I know; as I lately sent off from Ravenna to Trieste a poor devil of an English sailor, who had remained there sick, sorry, and penniless (having been set ashore in 1814), from the want of any accredited agent able or willing to help him homewards. Will you get this done? It will be the greatest favour to me. If you do, I will then send his name and condition, subject, of course, to rejection, if *not* approved when known.

I know that in the Levant you make consuls and Vice-Consuls, perpetually, of foreigners. This man is a Patrician, and has twelve thousand a year. His motive is a British protection in case

¹ *Paulo Purganti and his Wife*. Johnson's remark was "There is nothing in Prior that will excite to lewdness. If Lord Hailes thinks there is, he must be more combustible than other people."

² Count Guiccioli.

of new Invasions. Don't you think Croker would do it for us? To be sure, *my interest* is rare!! but, perhaps a brother-wit in the Tory line might do a good turn at the request of so harmless and long absent a Whig, particularly as there is no *salary* nor *burthen* of any sort to be annexed to the office.

I can assure you, I should look upon it as a great obligation; but, alas! that very circumstance may, very probably, operate to the contrary—indeed, it ought. But I have, at least, been an honest and an open enemy. Amongst your many splendid Government Connections, could not you, think you, get our Bibulus¹ made a Consul? Or make me one, that I may make him my Vice. You may be assured that, in case of accidents in Italy, he would be no feeble adjunct—as you would think if you knew his property.

What is all this about Tom Moore? but why do I ask? since the state of my own affairs would not permit me to be of use to him, although they are greatly improved since 1816, and may, with some more luck and a little prudence, become quite Clear. It seems his Claimants are *American* merchants? *There goes Nemesis!* Moore abused America. It is always thus in the long run:—Time, the Avenger. You have seen every trampler down, in turn, from Buonaparte to the simplest individuals. You saw how some were avenged even upon my insignificance, and how in turn Romilly paid for his atrocity. It is an odd World; but the Watch has its mainspring, after all.

¹ Bibulus was a Curule Ædile, a Prætor, and a Consul in the same years as Julius Cæsar was, though one of Cæsar's chief opponents.

So the Prince has been repealing Lord Ed.
Fitzgerald's forfeiture? ¹ *Ecco un' Sonnetto!*

To be the father of the fatherless,
To stretch the hand from the throne's height, and raise
 His offspring, who expired in other days
To make thy Sire's Sway by a kingdom less,—
This is to be a Monarch, and repress
 Envy into unutterable praise.
Dismiss thy Guard, and trust thee to such traits,
For who would lift a hand, except to bless?
Were it not easy, Sir, and is't not sweet
To make thyself beloved? and to be
Omnipotent by Mercy's means? for thus
Thy Sovereignty would grow but more complete,
A Despot thou, and yet thy people free,
And by the Heart, not Hand, enslaving us.

There, you dogs: there's a Sonnet for you:
you won't have such as that in a hurry from Mr.
Fitzgerald.² You may publish it with my name,
an ye wool. He deserves all praise, bad and
good; it was a very noble piece of principality.
Would you like an epigram—a translation?

If for silver, or for gold,
You could melt ten thousand pimples
 Into half a dozen dimples,
Then your face we might behold,
 Looking, doubtless, much more smugly,
Yet even then 'twould be damned ugly.

This was written on some Frenchwoman, by
Rulhières,³ I believe. And so "good morrow t'
"ye, good Master lieutenant."⁴

Yours,

BYRON.

¹ Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the Irish rebel (1763-1798). His attainder was repealed in 1819.

² William Thomas Fitzgerald (d. 1829), a versifier. Cf. p. 156.

³ Claude Carloman de Rulhière, historian and poet (1735-91).

⁴ Cf. *Henry VI*, Third Part, IV, vi, 1; *Richard III*, IV, i, 12; *Othello*, III, i, 44.

86. *To the Countess Guiccioli*¹

BOLOGNA, August 25, 1819.

MY DEAR TERESA,—I have read this book in your garden ;—my love, you were absent, or else I could not have read it. It is a favourite book of yours, and the writer was a friend of mine. You will not understand these English words, and *others* will not understand them—which is the reason I have not scrawled them in Italian. But you will recognise the hand-writing of him who passionately loved you, and you will divine that, over a book which was yours, he could only think of love. In that word, beautiful in all languages, but most so in yours—*Amor mio*—is comprised my existence here and hereafter. I feel I exist here, and I fear that I shall exist hereafter,—to *what* purpose you will decide ; my destiny rests with you, and you are a woman, seventeen years of age,² and two out of a convent. I wish that you had stayed there, with all my heart,—or, at least, that I had never met you in your married state.

But all this is too late. I love you, and you love me,—at least, you *say so*, and *act* as if you *did so*, which last is a great consolation in all events. But *I* more than love you, and cannot cease to love you.

Think of me, sometimes, when the Alps and the ocean divide us,—but they never will, unless you *wish it*.

BYRON.

¹ This letter was written on the last page of the Countess Guiccioli's copy of Madame de Staël's *Corinne*.

² Cf. Letter No. 83, where he says she is twenty.

87. *To John Cam Hobhouse*

VENICE, November 20, 1819.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—A few days ago I wrote to Douglas K.¹ to apprise him and my friends of my probable arrival near England in no very long period. The cause I have detailed at some length in my letter to Douglas.

Il Conte Guiccioli, at length discovering that his lady was estranged from him, gave us (like Mr. Croaker in the "Good-natured Man") "a mutual choice,"² that is the husband or the lover—him or me—one, but not both. The lady was for leaving him, and eloping or separating; and so should I, had I been twenty, instead of thirty and one years of age, for I loved her; but I knew the event would for her be irreparable, and that all her family—her sisters particularly and father—would be plunged into despair for the reputation of the rest of the girls; so I prevailed on her, with great difficulty, to return to Ravenna with her husband, who promised forgetfulness, if she would give me up.

He actually came to *me*, crying about it, and I told him, "if you abandon your wife I will take her undoubtedly; it is my duty, it is also my inclination in case of such extremity; but if, as you say, you are really disposed to live with and like her as before, I will not only not carry further disturbance into your family, but even repossess the Alps; for I have no hesitation in saying that Italy will be now to me insupportable."

After ten days of such things during which I had (and have still) the tertian ague, she agreed to go back with him; but *I* feel so wretched and

¹ Kinnaird.² Goldsmith, *The Good-Natur'd Man*, I.

low, and lonely, that I will leave the country, reluctantly indeed, but I will do it ; for, otherwise, if I formed a new *liaison* she would cut the figure of a woman *planted*, and I never will willingly hurt her self-love.

I *can have* no other motive, for *here nobody fights*, and as to assassination, I have risked it many a good time for her at Ravenna, and should hardly shrink now. I will say no more, except that it has been as bitter a cut-up for me as that of leaving England.

Guiccioli's lord intercepted a letter of her father, Count Ruggiero Gamba Ghiselli (there is the name at length), giving her some prudent advice to smooth the husband ; and this blew up the whole affair, besides some awkward evidence about sleeping together, and doors locked—which like a goose had been locked, and then afterwards forgotten to be re-opened ; so that he knocked his horns against the doors of his own drawing-room.

There is packing and preparation going on, and I mean to plod through the Tyrol with my little “ *shild* ” Allegrina, who however is not very well, and half the house have brought the tertian from the Mira—it made me delirious during one attack.

A German of the name of Simon—with your brother's recommendation from Trieste, has asked me to take him to England, and I will do so with the permission of God. William Bankes¹ is at Trieste, and has written to me.

November 21st.

I have a little plague, and some little trouble

¹ See Letter No. 9.

with the present state of my household, of whom five, including myself, have the intermittent fever, more or less.

Dr. Aglietti has this moment informed me that Allegra has the "*doppia terzana*," a febrile doubt-
loon, which it seems renders my departure from hence quite uncertain (as I will not and cannot go without her). It means that the poor child has the fever *daily*, and her nurse has it, besides a cameriere and a barcarôlo, my own has diminished. At first it was violent to a degree of temporary delirium, but has subsided in the third week to a slight attack, but has left my mind very weak and unintellectual.

All these things put together, prevent me from entering upon any of my purposes; and indeed make me postpone, from day to day, my departure; for the doctor will say nothing decided of my daughter, and I dare not remove till her journey is pronounced innocent.

I had things to say to Scrope.¹ There were things to say to you, and to Douglas—but—alas! here I am in a gloomy Venetian palace, never *more* alone than when alone,—unhappy in the retrospect, and at least as much so in the prospect; and at the moment when I trusted to set out—taken aback by this indisposition of my child which, however, thank God, as far as I can learn, is not dangerous; but very tiresome and tedious.

At present all my plans of revenge first, and emigration afterwards, in case of arriving and surviving near your coasts, are lulled upon the feverish pillow of a sick infant.

¹ Scrope Davies (see Letter No. 19).

I began this letter yesterday ; and within the twenty-four hours only was I made aware of the full extent of Allegra's malady. But my former letter to Kinnaird is neutralized by this event, except in case of her speedy recovery. In Italy I will not remain a moment longer than enables me to quit it.

I mean, or meant to go by the Tyrol, &c. &c. &c., and to write to you on my arrival at Calais.

You have never answered my letter of South American *enquiries*. I must go there, or to the Cape, anything but stay near England ; that is to say if I accomplish what I ought to do, in approaching it near enough, and if I do not, I shall have no further need to accomplish anything.

I allude to mere private business, but have no leisure, or rather too much, and too few spirits to explain further at present.

Yours ever and truly,

B.

88. To John Murray

RAVENNA, June 7, 1820.

DEAR MURRAY,—Enclosed is something which will interest you, (to wit), the opinion of *the* Greatest man of Germany—perhaps of Europe—upon one of the great men of your advertisements, (all “ famous hands,” as Jacob Tonson¹ used to say of his ragamuffins),—in short, a critique of *Goethe's* upon *Manfred*. There is the original, Mr. Hoppner's translation, and an Italian one ; keep them all in your archives,—for the opinions of such a man as Goethe, whether favourable or not, are always interesting, and this is moreover

¹ Jacob Tonson, the publisher (d. 1736).

favourable. His *Faust* I never read, for I don't know German ; but Mathew Monk Lewis, in 1816, at Coligny, translated most of it to me *vivâ voce*, and I was naturally much struck with it ; but it was the *Staubach* and the *Jungfrau*, and something else, much more than Faustus, that made me write *Manfred*. The first Scene, however, and that of Faustus are very similar. Acknowledge this letter.

Yours ever,

B.

P.S.—I have received *Ivanhoe* ;—good. Pray send me some tooth powder and *tincture* of Myrrh, by *Waite*, etc. *Ricciardetto* should have been translated literally, or not at all. As to puffing *Whistlecraft*, it won't do :¹ I'll tell you why some day or other. Cornwall's a poet,² but spoilt by the detestable Schools of the day. Mrs. Hemans is a poet also, but too stiltified and apostrophic, and quite wrong : men died calmly before the Christian æra, and since, without Christianity—witness the Romans, and, lately, Thistlewood,³ Sandt,⁴ and Louvel⁵—men who ought to have been weighed down with their crimes, even had they believed. A deathbed is a matter of nerves and constitution, and not of religion. Voltaire was frightened, Frederick of Prussia not : Christians the same, according to their strength rather than their creed. What does Helga

¹ An article in the *Quarterly Review*, on J. H. Frere's *Prospectus and Specimen of an Intended National Work* by William and Robert Whistlecraft, mentioned its affinity to *Ricciardetto* by Cardinal Forteguerri (1674-1735).

² " Barry Cornwall "—Bryan Waller Procter.

³ The Cato Street conspirator, who was hanged in 1820.

⁴ Executed in 1820 for the assassination of Kotzebue.

⁵ Murdered the Duc de Berri in 1820.

Herbert¹ mean by his *Stanza*? which is octave got drunk or gone mad. He ought to have his ears boxed with Thor's hammer for rhyming so fantastically.

The following letter to Hoppner, British Consul at Venice (in whose care Byron had at one time placed his natural daughter Allegra), raises a point from which has come perhaps the most serious attack that has been made on Byron's character.

An Italian servant of Shelley, Paolo Foggi, was dismissed for theft and misconduct with a Swiss girl, Elise, who was nurse to the Shelley's children, and had conveyed Allegra to Venice. Foggi thereupon tried to blackmail Shelley, and, that failing, proceeded to calumniate him to the Hoppners, who gave credence to his statements, as also Byron was inclined to do, when told, in confidence, by Hoppner. The story was that Claire Clairmont had become pregnant by Shelley; that, an unsuccessful attempt having been made by Shelley to procure abortion, the child had been sent to the Foundling Hospital; and that Shelley had neglected and ill-treated his wife. When, in the autumn of 1821, Shelley paid a visit to Byron at Ravenna, Byron told him about this. Shelley informed Mary, who was at Pisa, and who at once wrote an indignant defence of her husband to Mrs. Hoppner in a letter which

¹ William Herbert, the poet and divine. His poem *Helga* was published in 1815; *Hedin* in 1820. In *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* Byron describes him "wielding Thor's hammer" as a critic in the *Edinburgh Review*.

she sent to Shelley, to be shown to Byron, and to be forwarded—by Byron, with his comments—to Venice.

After Byron's death the letter was found among his papers. On this fact was based the charge by Dowden (often repeated as if there was no question of its truth) that Byron suppressed the letter. The motive ascribed by Dowden to Byron was reluctance to admit to Hoppner that he had betrayed his confidence and had believed false accusations against a friend.

The motivation seems inadequate to explain what—even if it does not strike one as at variance with one's knowledge of Byron's virtues and vices—would have been a dangerous proceeding, for the Shelleys might very easily have learnt that Mrs. Hoppner had not received the letter. The key to the mystery is possibly to be found in Mary's request to Shelley that the letter should be copied. It had been written in haste and agitation; she may have feared that it would be illegible. Dowden suggests that she wanted a copy to be kept, but that Shelley thought that she was anxious not to expose signs of her disturbance to comparative strangers. A copy in Shelley's hand, however, might have been unconvincing to the Hoppners, and, in replying to Mary, Shelley said that the original would be forwarded, and that he had not copied it. But it may have been arranged subsequently between Shelley and Byron that the latter should copy it for Mrs. Hoppner, and retain the original. In any case there is no proof that the original was not seen by the

Hoppners—even if the breach between them and Mary was never healed. The letter may have been sent to them, and at Byron's request returned. As Lord Ernle observes, a document containing an answer to a charge so gravely affecting the mother of Allegra was one that Byron might have desired to keep.

89. *To Richard Belgrave Hoppner*

RAVENNA, *Sept* 10^h, 1820.

MY DEAR HOPPNER,—*Ecco* Advocate Fossati's letter. No paper has nor will be signed. Pray *draw* on me for the Napoleons, for I have no mode of remitting them otherwise; Missiaglia would empower some one here to receive them for you, as it is not a *piazza bancale*.

I regret that you have such a bad opinion of Shiloh;¹ you used to have a good one. Surely he has talent and honour, but is crazy against religion and morality. His tragedy² is sad work; but the subject renders it so. His *Islam* had much poetry. You seem lately to have got some notion against him.

Clare writes me the most insolent letters about Allegra; see what a man gets by taking care of natural children! Were it not for the poor little child's sake, I am almost tempted to send her back to her atheistical mother, but that would be too bad; you cannot conceive the excess of her insolence, and I know not why, for I have been at great care and expense,—taking a house in the country on purpose for her. She has *two* maids and every possible attention. If Clare thinks that she shall ever interfere with the child's morals

¹ Shelley.

² *The Cenci*.

or education, she mistakes ; she never shall. The girl shall be a Christian and a married woman, if possible. As to seeing her, she may see her—under proper restrictions ; but she is not to throw every thing into confusion with her Bedlam behaviour. To express it delicately, I think Madame Clare is a damned bitch. What think you ?

Yours ever and truly,

B^N

EXTRACTS FROM A DIARY

(*Jan.—Feb.*, 1821)

[6 *Jan.*]

What is the reason that I have been, all my lifetime, more or less *ennuyé* ? and that, if any thing, I am rather less so now than I was at twenty, as far as my recollection serves ? I do not know how to answer this, but presume that it is constitutional,—as well as the waking in low spirits, which I have invariably done for many years. Temperance and exercise, which I have practised at times, and for a long time together vigorously and violently, made little or no difference. Violent passions did ;—when under their immediate influence—it is odd, but—I was in agitated, but *not* in depressed, spirits.

A dose of salts has the effect of a temporary inebriation, like light champagne, upon me. But wine and spirits make me sullen and savage to ferocity—silent, however, and retiring, and not quarrelsome, if not spoken to. Swimming also raises my spirits,—but in general they are low, and get daily lower. That is *hopeless* ; for I do not think I am so much *ennuyé* as I was at nineteen. The proof is, that then I must game, or drink, or

be in motion of some kind, or I was miserable. At present, I can mope in quietness; and like being alone better than any company—except the lady's whom I serve. But I feel a something, which makes me think that, if I ever reach near to old age, like Swift, "I shall die at top" first.¹ Only I do not dread idiotism or madness so much as he did. On the contrary, I think some quieter stages of both must be preferable to much of what men think the possession of their senses.

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[12 Jan.]

How strange are my thoughts!—The reading of the song of Milton, "Sabrina fair"² has brought back upon me—I know not how or why—the happiest, perhaps, days of my life (always excepting, here and there, a Harrow holiday in the two latter summers of my stay there) when living at Cambridge with Edward Noel Long, afterwards of the Guards,—who, after having served honourably in the expedition to Copenhagen (of which two or three thousand scoundrels yet survive in plight and pay), was drowned early in 1809, on his passage to Lisbon with his regiment in the *St. George* transport, which was run foul of in the night by another transport. We were rival swimmers—fond of riding—reading—and of conviviality. We had been at Harrow together; but—*there*, at least—his was a less boisterous spirit than mine. I was always cricketing—rebellng—fighting—*rowing* (from *row*, not *boat*-rowing, a different practice), and in all manner

¹ Edward Young, the poet, mentions having heard Swift say this (*Conjectures on Original Composition*).

² *Comus*.

of mischiefs ; while he was more sedate and polished. At Cambridge—both of Trinity—my spirit rather softened, or his roughened, for we became very great friends. The description of Sabrina's seat reminds me of our rival feats in *diving*. Though Cam's is not a very translucent wave, it was fourteen feet deep, where we used to dive for, and pick up—having thrown them in on purpose—plates, eggs, and even shillings. I remember, in particular, there was the stump of a tree (at least ten or twelve feet deep) in the bed of the river, in a spot where we bathed most commonly, round which I used to cling, and “wonder how the devil I came there.”

Our evenings we passed in music (he was musical, and played on more than one instrument, flute and violoncello), in which I was audience ; and I think that our chief beverage was soda-water. In the day we rode, bathed, and lounged, reading occasionally. I remember our buying, with vast alacrity, Moore's new quarto¹ (in 1806), and reading it together in the evenings.

We only passed the summer together ;—Long had gone into the Guards during the year I passed in Notts, away from college. *His* friendship, and a violent, though *pure*, love and passion—which held me at the same period—were the then romance of the most romantic period of my life.

.

[28 Jan.]

Why, at the very height of desire and human pleasure,—worldly, social, amorous, ambitious,

¹ *Epistles, Odes, and Other Poems.*

or even avaricious,—does there mingle a certain sense of doubt and sorrow—a fear of what is to come—a doubt of what *is*—a retrospect to the past, leading to a prognostication of the future? (The best of Prophets of the future is the Past.) Why is this, or these?—I know not, except that on a pinnacle we are most susceptible of giddiness, and that we never fear falling except from a precipice—the higher, the more awful, and the more sublime; and, therefore, I am not sure that Fear is not a pleasurable sensation; at least, *Hope* is; and *what Hope* is there without a deep leaven of Fear? and what sensation is so delightful as Hope? and, if it were not for Hope, where would the Future be?—in hell. It is useless to say *where* the Present is, for most of us know; and as for the Past, *what* predominates in memory?—*Hope baffled*. Ergo, in all human affairs, it is Hope—Hope—Hope. I allow sixteen minutes, though I never counted them, to any given or supposed possession. From whatever place we commence, we know where it all must end. And yet, what good is there in knowing it? It does not make men better or wiser. During the greatest horrors of the greatest plagues, (Athens and Florence, for example—see Thucydides and Machiavelli,) men were more cruel and profligate than ever. It is all a mystery. I feel most things, but I know nothing, except

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 — — — — —
 — — — — —¹

¹ " Thus marked, with impatient strokes of the pen, by himself in the original " (Moore).

90. To Percy Bysshe Shelley

RAVENNA, April 26, 1821.

The child¹ continues doing well, and the accounts are regular and favourable. It is gratifying to me that you and Mrs. Shelley do not disapprove of the step which I have taken, which is merely temporary.

I am very sorry to hear what you say of Keats—is it *actually* true? I did not think criticism had been so killing. Though I differ from you essentially in your estimate of his performances, I so much abhor all unnecessary pain, that I would rather he had been seated on the highest peak of Parnassus than have perished in such a manner. Poor fellow! though with such inordinate self-love he would probably have not been very happy. I read the review of *Endymion* in the *Quarterly*. It was severe,—but surely not so severe as many reviews in that and other journals upon others.

I recollect the effect on me of the *Edinburgh* on my first poem; it was rage, and resistance, and redress—but not despondency nor despair. I grant those are not amiable feelings; but, in this world of bustle and broil, and especially in the career of writing, a man should calculate upon his powers of *resistance* before he goes into the arena.

“Expect not life from pain nor danger free,
Nor deem the doom of man reversed for thee.”²

You know my opinion of *that second-hand* school of poetry. You also know my high opinion

¹ Allegra. Byron had placed her at this time in a convent near Ravenna.

² Johnson, *Vanity of Human Wishes*, ll. 155–6.

of your own poetry,—because it is of *no* school. I read *Cenci*—but, besides that I think the *subject* essentially *undramatic*, I am not an admirer of our old dramatists *as models*. I deny that the English have hitherto had a drama at all. Your *Cenci*, however, was a work of power, and poetry. As to *my* drama, pray revenge yourself upon it, by being as free as I have been with yours.

I have not yet got your *Prometheus*, which I long to see. I have heard nothing of mine, and do not know that it is yet published. I have published a pamphlet on the Pope controversy,¹ which you will not like. Had I known that Keats was dead—or that he was alive and so sensitive—I should have omitted some remarks upon his poetry, to which I was provoked by his *attack* upon *Pope*,² and my disapprobation of *his own* style of writing.

You want me to undertake a great poem—I have not the inclination nor the power. As I grow older, the indifference—*not* to life, for we love it by instinct—but to the stimuli of life, increases. Besides, this late failure of the Italians has latterly disappointed me for many reasons,—some public, some personal. My respects to Mrs. S.

Yours ever,

B.

P.S.—Could not you and I contrive to meet this summer? Could not you take a run here *alone*?

¹ *Letter on the Rev. Wm. L. Bowles's Strictures on the Life and Writings of Pope*, published in March 1821.

² "Sleep and Poetry," ll. 193–206. Keats had died in February. The allusion to him appears in a second *Letter* (not printed until 1835) from which Byron instructed Murray to withdraw a passage.

EXTRACTS FROM DETACHED THOUGHTS (1821)

Oct. 15th, 1821.

I have been thinking over the other day on the various comparisons, good or evil, which I have seen published of myself in different journals English and foreign. This was suggested to me by accidentally turning over a foreign one lately ; for I have made it a rule latterly never to *search* for anything of the kind, but not to avoid the perusal if presented by Chance.

To begin then—I have seen myself compared personally or poetically, in English, French, *German* (as interpreted to me), Italian, and Portuguese, within these nine years, to Rousseau, Goëthe—Young—Aretino—Timon of Athens—“ An Alabaster Vase lighted up within ”—Satan — Shakespeare — Buonaparte — Tiberius — Aeschylus—Sophocles—Euripides—Harlequin—The Clown—Sternhold and Hopkins—to the Phantasmagoria—to Henry the 8th—to Chenies—to Mirabeau—to young R. Dallas (the Schoolboy)—to Michael Angelo—to Raphael—to a *petit maître*—to Diogenes—to Childe Harold—to Lara—to the Count in Beppo—to Milton—to Pope—to Dryden—to Burns—to Savage—to Chatterton—to “ oft have I heard of thee my Lord Biron ” in Shakespeare—to Churchill the poet—to Kean the Actor—to Alfieri, etc., etc., etc. The likeness to Alfieri was asserted very seriously by an Italian, who had known him in his younger days : it of course related merely to our apparent personal dispositions. He did not assert it to *me* (for we were not then good friends), but in society.

The Object of so many contradictory comparisons must probably be like something different

from them all ; but what *that* is, is more than *I* know, or any body else.

My mother, before I was twenty, would have it that I was like Rousseau, and Madame de Staël used to say so too in 1813, and the *Edin^h Review* has something of the sort in its critique on the 4th Canto of *Ch^e Ha^d*. I can't see any point of resemblance : he wrote prose, I verse : he was of the people, I of the Aristocracy : he was a philosopher, I am none : he published his first work at forty, I mine at eighteen : his first essay brought him universal applause, mine the contrary : he married his housekeeper, I could not keep house with my wife : he thought all the world in a plot against *him*, my little world seems to think *me* in a plot against it, if I may judge by their abuse in print and coterie : he liked Botany, I like flowers, and herbs, and trees, but know nothing of their pedigrees : he wrote Music, I limit my knowledge of it to what I catch by *Ear*—I never could learn any thing by *study*, not even a language, it was all by rote and ear and memory : he had a bad memory, I *had* at least an excellent one (ask Hodgson the poet, a good judge, for he has an astonishing one) : he wrote with hesitation and care, I with rapidity and rarely with pains : *he* could never ride nor swim “nor was cunning of fence,” *I* am an excellent swimmer, a decent though not at all a dashing rider (having staved in a rib at eighteen in the course of scampering), and was sufficient of fence—particularly of the Highland broadsword ; not a bad boxer when I could keep my temper, which was difficult, but which I strove to do ever since I knocked down Mr. Purling and put his knee-pan out (with the gloves on) in Angelo's

and Jackson's rooms¹ in 1806 during the sparring ; and I was besides a very fair cricketer—one of the Harrow Eleven when we played against Eton in 1805. Besides, Rousseau's way of life, his country, his manners, his whole character, were so very different, that I am at a loss to conceive how such a comparison could have arisen, as it has done three several times, and all in rather a remarkable manner. I forgot to say, that *he* was also short-sighted, and that hitherto my eyes have been the contrary to such a degree, that, in the largest theatre of Bologna, I distinguished and read some busts and inscriptions painted near the stage, from a box so distant, and so *darkly* lighted, that none of the company (composed of young and very bright-eyed people—some of them in the same box) could make out a letter, and thought it was a trick, though I had never been in that theatre before.

Altogether, I think myself justified in thinking the comparison not well founded. I don't say this out of pique, for Rousseau was a great man, and the thing if true were flattering enough ; but I have no idea of being pleased with a chimera.

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It is singular how soon we lose the impression of what ceases to be *constantly* before us. A year impairs, a lustre obliterates. There is little distinct left without an *effort* of memory : *then* indeed the lights are rekindled for a moment ; but who can be sure that Imagination is not the torch-bearer ? Let any man try at the end of *ten* years to bring before him the features, or the mind, or the sayings, or the habits, of his best

¹ Angelo was a fencing master ; Jackson a boxer.

friend, or his *greatest* man (I mean his favourite—his Buonaparte, his this, that or 'tother), and he will be surprized at the extreme confusion of his ideas. I speak confidently on this point, having always past for one who had a good, aye, an excellent memory. I except indeed our recollections of Womankind: there is no forgetting *them* (and be d—d to them) any more than any other remarkable Era, such as “the revolution” or “the plague,” or “the Invasion,” or “the Comet,” or “the War” of such and such an Epoch—being the favourite dates of Mankind, who have so many *blessings* in their lot, that they never make their Calendars from them, being too common. For instance, you see “the great drought,” “the Thames frozen over,” “the Seven years war broke out,” the E. or F. or S. “Revolution commenced,” “The Lisbon Earthquake,” “the Lima Earthquake,” “The Earthquake of Calabria,” the “Plague of London,” “Ditto of Constantinople,” “the Sweating Sickness,” “The Yellow fever of Philadelphia,” etc., etc., etc.; but you don't see “the abundant harvest,” “the fine Summer,” “the long peace,” “the wealthy speculation,” the “wreckless voyage,” recorded so emphatically? By the way, there has been a *thirty years war*, and a *Seventy years war*: was there ever a *Seventy or a thirty years Peace*? Or was there ever even a *day's Universal peace*, except perhaps in China, where they have found out the miserable happiness of a stationary and unwarlike mediocrity? And is all this, because Nature is niggard or savage? or Mankind ungrateful? Let philosophers decide. I am none.

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I sometimes wish that I had studied languages with more attention : those which I know, even the classical (Greek and Latin, in the usual proportion of a sixth form boy), and a smattering of modern Greek, the Armenian and Arabic Alphabets, a few Turkish and Albanian phrases, oaths, or requests, Italian tolerably, Spanish less than tolerably, French to read with ease but speak with difficulty—or rather not at all—all have been acquired by ear or eye, and never by anything like Study. Like “Edie Ochiltree,”¹ “I never dowed to bide a hard turn o’ wark in my life.”

To be sure, I set in zealously for the Armenian and Arabic, but I fell in love with some absurd womankind both times, before I had overcome the Characters ; and at Malta and Venice left the profitable Orientalists for—for—(no matter what), notwithstanding that my master, the Padre Pasquale Aucher (for whom, by the way, I compiled the major part of two Armenian and English Grammars), assured me “that the terrestrial Paradise “had been certainly in *Armenia*.” I went seeking it—God knows where—did I find it? Umph! Now and then, for a minute or two.

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People have wondered at the Melancholy which runs through my writings. Others have wondered at my personal gaiety ; but I recollect once, after an hour, in which I had been sincerely and particularly gay, and rather brilliant, in company, my wife replying to me when I said (upon her remarking my high spirits) “and yet, Bell, “I have been called and mis-called Melancholy

¹ *The Antiquary*, ch. xxiii.

"—you must have seen how falsely frequently."
"No, B." (she answered) "it is not so: at *heart*
"you are the most melancholy of mankind, and
"often when apparently gayest."

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My School friendships were with *me passions* (for I was always violent), but I do not know that there is one which has endured (to be sure, some have been cut short by death) till now. That with Lord Clare began one of the earliest and lasted longest, being only interrupted by distance, that I know of. I never hear the word "*Clare*" without a beating of the heart even *now*, and write it with the feelings of 1803-4-5 ad infinitum.

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Of the Immortality of the Soul, it appears to me that there can be little doubt, if we attend for a moment to the action of Mind. It is in perpetual activity. I used to doubt of it, but reflection has taught me better. It acts also so very independent of body: in dreams for instance incoherently and madly, I grant you; but still it is *Mind*, and much more *Mind* than when we are awake. Now, that *this* should not act *separately*, as well as jointly, who can pronounce? The Stoics, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, call the present state "a Soul which drags a Carcase:" a heavy chain, to be sure; but all chains, being material, may be shaken off.

How far our future life will be individual, or, rather, how far it will at all resemble our *present* existence, is another question; but that the *Mind* is *eternal*, seems as probable as that the body is not so. Of course, I have ventured upon the question without recurring to Revelation, which,

however, is at least as rational a solution of it as any other.

A *material* resurrection seems strange, and even absurd, except for purposes of punishment; and all punishment, which is to *revenge* rather than *correct*, must be *morally wrong*. And *when the World is at an end*, what moral or warning purpose *can* eternal tortures answer? Human passions have probably disfigured the divine doctrines here, but the whole thing is inscrutable. It is useless to tell me *not* to *reason*, but to *believe*. You might as well tell a man not to wake but *sleep*. And then to *bully* with torments! and all that. I cannot help thinking that the *menace* of Hell makes as many devils, as the severe penal codes of inhuman humanity make villains.

Man is born *passionate* of body, but with an innate though secret tendency to the love of Good in his Mainspring of Mind. But God help us all! It is at present a sad jar of atoms.

PISA, Nov. 5th, 1821.

"There is a strange coincidence sometimes in "the little things of this world, Sancho," says Sterne in a letter (if I mistake not);¹ and so I have often found it.

Page 128, article 91,² of this collection of scattered things, I had alluded to my friend Lord Clare in terms such as my feelings suggested. About a week or two afterwards, I met him on the road between Imola and Bologna, after not having met for seven or eight years. He was abroad in 1814, and came home just as I set out in 1816.

¹ Sterne, Letter lxxxv (to the negro Ignatius Sancho).

² Here p. 232.

This meeting annihilated for a moment all the years between the present time and the days of *Harrow*. It was a new and inexplicable feeling, like rising from the grave, to me. Clare, too, was much agitated—*more* in appearance than even myself; for I could feel his heart beat to his fingers' ends, unless, indeed, it was the pulse of my own which made me think so. He told me that I should find a note from him, left at Bologna. I did. We were obliged to part for our different journeys—he for Rome, I for Pisa; but with the promise to meet again in Spring. We were but five minutes together, and in the public road; but I hardly recollect an hour of my existence which could be weighed against them. He had heard that I was coming on, and had left his letter for me at B., because the people with whom he was travelling could not wait longer.

Of all I have ever known, he has always been the least altered in every thing from the excellent qualities and kind affections which attached me to him so strongly at School. I should hardly have thought it possible for Society (or the World as it is called), to leave a being with so little of the leaven of bad passions. I do not speak from personal experience only, but from all I have ever heard of him from others during absence and distance.

91. *To Lady Byron*

(To the care of the Hon. Mrs. Leigh, London.)

PISA, November 17, 1821.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of "Ada's hair," which is very soft and pretty, and nearly as dark already as mine was at twelve years old, if I may judge from what I recollect of some in

Augusta's possession, taken at that age. But it don't curl,—perhaps from its being let grow.

I also thank you for the inscription of the date and name, and I will tell you why ;—I believe that they are the only two or three words of your hand-writing in my possession. For your letters I returned ; and except the two words, or rather the one word, " Household," written twice in an old account book, I have no other. I burnt your last note, for two reasons :—firstly, it was written in a style not very agreeable ; and, secondly, I wished to take your word without documents, which are the worldly resources of suspicious people.

I suppose that this note will reach you somewhere about Ada's birthday—the 10th of December, I believe. She will then be six, so that in about twelve more I shall have some chance of meeting her ;—perhaps sooner, if I am obliged to go to England by business or otherwise. Recollect, however, one thing, either in distance or nearness ;—every day which keeps us asunder should, after so long a period, rather soften our mutual feelings, which must always have one rallying-point as long as our child exists, which I presume we both hope will be long after either of her parents.

The time which has elapsed since the separation has been considerably more than the whole brief period of our union, and the not much longer one of our prior acquaintance. We both made a bitter mistake ; but now it is over, and irrevocably so. For, at thirty-three on my part, and a few years less on yours, though it is no very extended period of life, still it is one when the habits and thought are generally so formed as to admit of no modification ; and as we could not

agree when younger, we should with difficulty do so now.

I say all this, because I own to you, that, notwithstanding every thing, I considered our re-union as not impossible for more than a year after the separation ;—but then I gave up the hope entirely and for ever. But this very impossibility of re-union seems to me at least a reason why, on all the few points of discussion which can arise between us, we should preserve the courtesies of life, and as much of its kindness as people who are never to meet may preserve perhaps more easily than nearer connections. For my own part, I am violent, but not malignant ; for only fresh provocations can awaken my resentments. To you, who are colder and more concentrated, I would just hint, that you may sometimes mistake the depth of a cold anger for dignity, and a worse feeling for duty. I assure you that I bear you *now* (whatever I may have done) no resentment whatever. Remember, that *if you have injured me* in aught, this forgiveness is something ; and that, if I have *injured you*, it is something more still, if it be true, as the moralists say, that the most offending are the least forgiving.

Whether the offence has been solely on my side, or reciprocal, or on yours chiefly, I have ceased to reflect upon any but two things,—viz. that you are the mother of my child, and that we shall never meet again. I think if you also consider the two corresponding points with reference to myself, it will be better for all three.

Yours ever,

NOEL¹ BYRON.

¹ On the death of Lady Byron's mother, Lady Noel, Byron, by royal license, took the name of Noel, and henceforth signed himself "Noel Byron."

92. *To Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*

PISA, January 12, 1822.

MY DEAR SIR WALTER.—I need not say how grateful I am for your letter, but I must own my ingratitude in not having written to you again long ago. Since I left England (and it is not for all the usual term of transportation) I have scribbled to five hundred blockheads on business, etc., without difficulty, though with no great pleasure; and yet, with the notion of addressing you a hundred times in my head, and always in my heart, I have not done what I ought to have done. I can only account for it on the same principle of tremulous anxiety with which one sometimes makes love to a beautiful woman of our own degree, with whom one is enamoured in good earnest; whereas, we attack a fresh-coloured housemaid without (I speak, of course, of earlier times) any sentimental remorse or mitigation of our virtuous purpose.

I owe to you far more than the usual obligation for the courtesies of literature and common friendship; for you went out of your way in 1817 to do me a service, when it required not merely kindness, but courage to do so: to have been recorded by you in such a manner, would have been a proud memorial at any time, but at such a time, when “all the world and his wife,” as the proverb goes, were trying to trample upon me, was something still higher to my self-esteem,—I allude to the *Quarterly Review* of the Third Canto of *Childe Harold*, which Murray told me was written by you,—and, indeed, I should have known it without his information, as there could not be *two* who *could* and *would* have done this

at the time. Had it been a common criticism, however eloquent or panegyrical, I should have felt pleased, undoubtedly, and grateful, but not to the extent which the extraordinary good-heartedness of the whole proceeding must induce in any mind capable of such sensations. The very *tardiness* of this acknowledgment will, at least, show that I have not forgotten the obligation; and I can assure you that my sense of it has been out at compound interest during the delay. I shall only add one word upon the subject, which is, that I think that you, and Jeffrey, and Leigh Hunt, were the only literary men, of numbers whom I know (and some of whom I had served), who dared venture even an anonymous word in my favour just then: and that, of those three I had never seen *one* at all—of the second much less than I desired—and that the third was under no kind of obligation to me, whatever; while the other *two*¹ had been actually attacked by me on a former occasion; *one*, indeed, with some provocation, but the other wantonly enough. So you see you have been heaping “coals of fire,” etc., in the true gospel manner, and I can assure you that they have burnt down to my very heart.

I am glad that you accepted the Inscription.² I meant to have inscribed *The Foscarini*³ to you instead; but, first, I heard the *Cain* was thought the least bad of the two as a composition; and, 2dly, I have abused Southey like a pickpocket, in a note to *The Foscarini*, and I recollected that he is a friend of yours (though not of mine), and

¹ Scott and Jeffrey, in *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*.

² Of *Cain*.

³ *The Two Foscari*.

that it would not be the handsome thing to dedicate to one friend any thing containing such matters about another. However, I'll work the Laureate before I have done with him, as soon as I can muster Billingsgate therefor. I like a row, and always did from a boy, on the course of which propensity, I must needs say, that I have found it the most easy of all to be gratified, personally and poetically. You disclaim "jealousies;" but I would ask, as Boswell did of Johnson, "of *whom could you be jealous?*"¹—of none of the living certainly, and (taking all and all into consideration) of which of the dead? I don't like to bore you about the Scotch novels, (as they call them, though two of them are wholly English, and the rest half so), but nothing can or could ever persuade me, since I was the first ten minutes in your company, that you are *not* the man. To me those novels have so much of "Auld lang syne" (I was bred a canny Scot till ten years old,) that I never move without them; and when I removed from Ravenna to Pisa the other day, and sent on my library before, they were the only books that I kept by me, although I already have them by heart.

January 27, 1822.

I delayed till now concluding, in the hope that I should have got *The Pirate*, who is under way for me, but has not yet hove in sight. I hear that your daughter is married,² and I suppose by this time you are half a grandfather—a young one, by

¹ Perhaps a reference to a passage in which Boswell speaks of Johnson's superiority to his contemporaries (*Life*, ed. G. B. Hill, Vol. I, p. 47).

² Charlotte Sophia Scott married J. G. Lockhart.

the way. I have heard great things of Mrs. Lockhart's personal and mental charms, and much good of her lord : that you may live to see as many novel Scotts as there are Scott's novels, is the very bad pun, but sincere wish of

Yours ever most affectionately, etc.

P.S.—Why don't you take a turn in Italy? You would find yourself as well known and as welcome as in the Highlands among the natives. As for the English, you would be with them as in London ; and I need not add, that I should be delighted to see you again, which is far more than I shall ever feel or say for England, or (with a few exceptions " of kith, kin, and allies ") any thing that it contains. But my " heart warms to the " tartan,"¹ or to anything of Scotland, which reminds me of Aberdeen and other parts, not so far from the Highlands as that town, about Invercauld and Braemar, where I was sent to drink goat's *fey*² in 1795-6, in consequence of a threatened decline after the scarlet fever. But I am gossiping, so, good night—and the gods be with your dreams !

Pray, present my respects to Lady Scott, who may, perhaps, recollect having seen me in town in 1815.

I see that one of your supporters (for, like Sir Hildebrand,³ I am fond of Guillim⁴) is a *mermaid*; it is my *crest* too, and with precisely the same curl of tail. There's concatenation for you :—I am building a little cutter at Genoa, to go a cruising in the summer. I know *you* like the sea too.

¹ *Heart of Midlothian*, ch. xxxv.

² *Ibid.* ch. xlix.

³ *Rob Roy*, ch. x.

⁴ John Guillim (1565-1621), who systematised the science of heraldry.

On April 22, 1822, Byron's natural daughter, Allegra, died, aged five years and three months. The Countess Guiccioli thus describes Byron's grief—"He was dreadfully agitated by the first intelligence of her illness; and when afterwards that of her death arrived, I was obliged to fulfil the melancholy task of communicating it to him. For several evenings he had not left his house; I therefore went to him. His first question was relative to the courier he had despatched for tidings of his daughter, and whose delay disquieted him. After a short interval of suspense, with every caution which my own sorrow suggested, I deprived him of all hope of the child's recovery. 'I understand,' said he,—'it is enough, say no more.' A mortal paleness spread itself over his face, his strength failed him, and he sunk into a seat. His look was fixed, and the expression such that I began to fear for his reason; he did not shed a tear; and his countenance manifested so hopeless, so profound, so sublime a sorrow, that at the moment he appeared a being of a nature superior to humanity. He remained immovable in the same attitude for an hour, and no consolation which I endeavoured to afford him seemed to reach his ears, far less his heart. He desired to be left alone, and I was obliged to leave him. I found him on the following morning tranquillised, and with an expression of religious resignation on his features. 'She is more fortunate than we are,' he said; 'besides, her position in the world would scarcely

“ have allowed her to be happy. It is God’s will
“ —let us mention it no more.’ And from that
“ day he would never pronounce her name ; but
“ became more anxious when he spoke of Ada,—
“ so much so as to disquiet himself when the
“ usual accounts sent him were for a post or two
“ delayed.”

The body was sent to England, to be buried in Harrow Church, and Byron composed the wording for a mural tablet. The Vicar, while deprecating a memorial which would establish Byron’s paternity (as this did), stopped short of refusing his consent. “ The injury,” he wrote to Murray, “ which, in my judgement, Lord Byron is from day to day inflicting upon society is no justification for measures of retaliation and unkindness.” Objection was raised by several “ leading and influential persons in the parish,” and the churchwardens issued a prohibition against admitting the tablet into the church. Allegra was therefore buried at the entrance of the church, but no tablet or memorial was erected.

93. *To Percy Bysshe Shelley*

April 23, 1822.

The blow was stunning and unexpected ; for I thought the danger over, by the long interval between her stated amelioration and the arrival of the express. But I have borne up against it as I best can, and so far successfully, that I can go about the usual business of life with the same appearance of composure, and even greater. There is nothing to prevent your coming to-

morrow ; but, perhaps, to-day, and yester-evening, it was better not to have met. I do not know that I have any thing to reproach in my conduct, and certainly nothing in my feelings and intentions, towards the dead. But it is a moment when we are apt to think that, if this or that had been done, such event might have been prevented,—though every day and hour shows us that they are the most natural and inevitable. I suppose that Time will do his usual work—Death has done his.

Yours ever,

N. B.

The next letter alludes to Shelley's death by drowning, on his way back from Leghorn, where he had sailed to see Leigh Hunt and Byron at Pisa.

"Shelley," wrote Byron to Moore, four months earlier, "is to my knowledge, the least selfish and "the mildest of men—a man who has made more "sacrifices of his fortunes and feelings for others "than any other I have ever heard of. With his "speculative opinions I have nothing in common, "nor desire to have." A few days after his letter to Murray, he wrote, "There is thus another man "gone, about whom the world was ill-naturedly, "and ignorantly, and brutally mistaken. It will, "perhaps, do him justice now, when he can be "no better for it."

94. *To John Murray*

PISA, August 3^d 1822.

DEAR SIR,—I have received your scrap with H. Drury's¹ letter enclosed. It is just like him: always kind and ready to oblige his old friends.

¹ See note to Letter No. 4.

Will you have the goodness to *send immediately* to Mr. Douglas Kinnaird, and inform him that I have *not* received the *remittances*, *due* to me from the funds a month and more ago, and *promised by him to be sent by every post*, which omission is of great inconvenience to me, and indeed inexcusable as well as unintelligible. As I have written to *him* repeatedly, I suppose that *his* or *my* letters have miscarried.

I presume you have heard that Mr. Shelley and Capt. Williams were lost on the 7th Ul^o in their passage from Leghorn to Spezia in their own open boat. You may imagine the state of their families : I never saw such a scene, nor wish to see such another.

You were all brutally mistaken about Shelley, who was, without exception, the *best* and least selfish man I ever knew. I never knew one who was not a beast in comparison.

Yours ever,

N. B.

From October 1822 to July 1823 Byron lived at Albaro, near Genoa. The Hunts, whom the next letter mentions, were in a house close by, with Mary Shelley. In the previous June, Leigh Hunt, with his wife and six children, had come to Pisa, to launch the *Liberal* with Byron and Shelley, and for the best part of two years Hunt was Byron's guest. After four numbers the *Liberal* died.

95. To Mrs. Shelley

6th October, 1822.

The sofa—which I regret is *not* of your furniture—it was purchased by me at Pisa since you left it.

It is convenient for my room, though of little value (about 12 pauls), and I offered to send another (now sent) in its stead. I preferred retaining the purchased furniture, but always intended that you should have as good or better in its place. I have a particular dislike to anything of Shelley's being within the same walls with Mrs. Hunt's children. They are dirtier and more mischievous than Yahoos. What they can't destroy with their filth they will with their fingers. I presume you received ninety and odd crowns from the wreck of the *Don Juan*, and also the price of the boat purchased by Captain R.,¹ if not, you will have *both*. Hunt has these in hand.

With regard to any difficulties about money, I can only repeat that I will be your banker till this state of things is cleared up, and you can see what is to be done; so there is little to hinder you on that score. I was confined for four days to my bed at Lerici. Poor Hunt, with his six little blackguards, are coming slowly up; as usual he turned back once—was there ever such a *kraal* out of the Hottentot country?

N. B.

The letter which follows refers to Byron's acquaintance with Lord and Lady Blessington, who were travelling in Italy with Count D'Orsay. For the two months following, Byron and Lady Blessington met frequently. "They rode together, exchanged verses, gave and received advice, interchanged keepsakes, and parted

¹ Capt. Daniel Roberts, R.N., Trelawny's friend, who built Shelley's yacht (named *Don Juan* by Trelawny, and renamed *Ariel* by Shelley).

“with tears” (Ernle, *Letters and Journals*). “Of all the ladies,” says Sir John Murray (Lord Byron’s *Correspondence*), “with whom Byron “associated, Lady Blessington was perhaps the “one best suited by her charm, her good sense, her “intelligence, and her sympathy to be a companion “of Byron if they had met in earlier days: had “she been destined to be his wife his whole career “would have been changed. Her *Conversations “of Byron*, published in 1834, is one of the most “interesting and illuminating accounts of him “which exist.”

Marguerite Power (1789–1849), daughter of a small Irish landowner, was at the age of fifteen married to Captain Farmer, from whom she separated almost immediately. For some years she was on intimate terms with a Captain Jenkins, and afterwards with Lord Mountjoy, who in 1816 was created Earl of Blessington, and in 1817 on the death of her husband married her. Her beauty (as seen in her portrait by Lawrence), her wit, and her husband’s hospitality, made their house in St. James’s Square a celebrated centre of politics, learning, literature, and art. In 1822 Lady Blessington became closely associated with Count Alfred D’Orsay, who thenceforward devoted his life to her.

Alfred Count D’Orsay, the son of one of Napoleon’s generals, and a grandson of the King of Würtemberg, was introduced to English society by his brother-in-law, the Duc de Grammont. In 1827 he married Lord Blessington’s daughter (by his first marriage), but owing to his conduct

his wife separated from him. He was considered the handsomest man of his day ; was a leader of the fashionable world ; excelled in sports ; was a painter, sculptor, and wit ; and wrote a journal (which he afterwards destroyed lest it might be taken to express his matured opinions of England).

On the death of Lord Blessington in 1829 Lady Blessington was left with an inadequate income. She and Count D'Orsay continued to entertain on a lavish scale, and to meet expenses she took to writing novels and other books. In 1849 the financial crash came. They had to flee to Paris, where three months later D'Orsay died, and three years later Lady Blessington.

96. *To Thomas Moore*

GENOA, April 2, 1823.

I have just seen some friends of yours, who paid me a visit yesterday, which, in honour of them and of you, I returned to-day ;—as I reserve my bear-skin and teeth, and paws and claws, for our enemies.

I have also seen Henry Fox, Lord Holland's son, whom I had not looked upon since I left him a pretty, mild boy, without a neck-cloth, in a jacket, and in delicate health, seven long years ago, at the period of mine eclipse—the third, I believe, as I have generally one every two or three years. I think that he has the softest and most amiable expression of countenance I ever saw, and manners correspondent. If to those he can add hereditary talents, he will keep the name of Fox in all its freshness for half a century more, I hope. I speak from a transient glimpse—but

I love still to yield to such impressions ; for I have ever found that those I liked longest and best, I took to at first sight ; and I always liked that boy—perhaps, in part, from some resemblance in the less fortunate part of our destinies—I mean, to avoid mistakes, his lameness. But there is this difference, that *he* appears a halting angel, who has tripped against a star ; whilst I am *Le Diable Boiteux*,—a sobriquet, which I marvel that, amongst their various *nominis umbræ*; the Orthodox have not hit upon.

Your other allies, whom I have found very agreeable personages, are Milor Blessington and *épouse*, travelling with a very handsome companion, in the shape of a “ French Count ” (to use Farquhar’s phrase in the *Beaux’ Stratagem*¹), who who has all the air of a *Cupidon déchaîné*, and is one of the few specimens I have seen of our ideal of a Frenchman *before* the Revolution—an old friend with a new face, upon whose like I never thought that we should look again. Miladi seems highly literary, to which, and your honour’s acquaintance with the family, I attribute the pleasure of having seen them. She is also very pretty even in a morning,—a species of beauty on which the sun of Italy does not shine so frequently as the chandelier. Certainly, English women wear better than their continental neighbours of the same sex. Mountjoy seems very good-natured, but is much tamed, since I recollect him in all the glory of gems and snuff-boxes, and uniforms, and theatricals, and speeches in our house—“ I mean, of peers,”²—(I must refer

¹ Count Bellair, “ a French officer.”

² Pope, “ On receiving from the Right Hon. the Lady Frances Shirley a standish and two pens.”

you to Pope—whom you don't read and won't appreciate—for that quotation, which you must allow to be poetical,) and sitting to Stroelling, the painter, (do you remember our visit, with Leckie, to the German?) to be depicted as one of the heroes of Agincourt, "with his long sword, saddle, "bridle, Whack fal de,"¹ etc., etc.

I have been unwell—caught a cold and inflammation, which menaced a conflagration, after dining with our ambassador, Monsieur Hill,²—not owing to the dinner, but my carriage broke down in the way home, and I had to walk some miles, up hill partly, after hot rooms, in a very bleak, windy evening, and over-hotted, or over-colded myself. I have not been so robustious as formerly, ever since the last summer, when I fell ill after a long swim in the Mediterranean, and have never been quite right up to this present writing. I am thin,—perhaps thinner than you saw me, when I was nearly transparent, in 1812,—and am obliged to be moderate of my mouth; which, nevertheless, won't prevent me (the gods willing) from dining with your friends the day after to-morrow.

They give me a very good account of you, and of your nearly Emprisoned *Angels*.³ But why did you change your title?—you will regret this some day. The bigots are not to be conciliated; and, if they were—are they worth it? I suspect that I am a more orthodox Christian than you are; and, whenever I see a real Christian, either in practice or in theory, (for I never yet found the man who could produce either when put to the

¹ *The Bold Dragoon*.

² William Noel-Hill, later Lord Berwick.

³ *Loves of the Angels* (published in 1822).

proof,) I am his disciple. But, till then, I cannot truckle to tithe-mongers,—nor can I imagine what has made *you* circumcise your Seraphs.

I have been far more persecuted than you, as you may judge by my present decadence,—for I take it that I am as low in popularity and book-selling as any writer can be. At least, so my friends assure me—blessings on their benevolence ! This they attribute to Hunt ; but they are wrong—it must be, partly at least, owing to myself ; be it so. As to Hunt, I prefer *not* having turned him to starve in the streets to any personal honour which might have accrued from some genuine philanthropy. I really act upon principle in this matter, for we have nothing much in common ; and I cannot describe to you the despairing sensation of trying to do something for a man who seems incapable or unwilling to do any thing further for himself,—at least, to the purpose. It is like pulling a man out of a river who directly throws himself in again. For the last three or four years Shelley assisted, and had once actually extricated him. I have since his demise,—and even before,—done what I could : but it is not in my power to make this permanent. I want Hunt to return to England, for which I would furnish him with the means in comfort ; and his situation *there*, on the whole, is bettered, by the payment of a portion of his debts, etc. ; and he would be on the spot to continue his Journal or Journals, with his brother, who seems a sensible, plain, sturdy, and enduring person. * *

VII
GREECE
(1823-1824)

The dead have been awakened—shall I sleep ?
The World's at war with tyrants—shall I crouch ?
The harvest's ripe—and shall I pause to reap ?
I slumber not ; the thorn is in my Couch ;
Each day a trumpet soundeth in mine ear,
Its echo in my heart—

Byron, from the *Journal in Cephalonia* (June 19, 1823).

As far back as 1817 Byron had told Moore that if he lived ten years more he would yet “do” something—declaring that literature was not his true vocation. The collapse of the Italian movement, in which he was ready to be a leader, had been a disappointment to him. At last an opportunity came of showing himself a man of action. For two years the Greeks had been struggling to free themselves from Turkey. Neither England nor Russia was in a position to intervene actively, but in 1823 a Greek Committee was formed in London, and Byron was unanimously elected a member. He decided to devote all his financial resources to the cause of the Greeks. He chartered a boat, the *Hercules*, for his expedition ; and in July 1823, with Trelawny, the young Gamba, a Dr. Bruno, and some servants, including Fletcher, he sailed from Genoa to Greece, via Leghorn.

97. To John Cam Hobhouse

GENOA, April 7, 1823.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I saw Capt. Blaquièrre,¹ and the Greek companion of his mission, on Saturday. Of course I entered very sincerely into the object of their journey, and have even offered to go up to the Levant in July, if the Greek provisional government think that I could be of any use. It is not that I could pretend to anything in a military capacity. I have not the presumption of the philosopher at Ephesus who lectured before Hannibal on the art of war²; nor is it much that an individual foreigner can do in any other way, but perhaps as a reporter of the actual state of things there, or in carrying on any correspondence between them and their western friends, I might be of use; at any rate, I would try. Capt. Blaquièrre (who is to write to you) wishes to have me named as a member of the committee in England. I fairly told him that my name, in its present unpopularity there, would probably do more harm than good; but of this you can judge, and certainly without offence to me, for I have no wish either to *shine*, or to appear officious; in the meantime, he is to correspond with me. I gave him a letter to Ld. Sydney Osborne³ at Corfu; but a mere letter of introduction, as Osborne will be hampered by his office in any political point of view. There are some obstacles, too, to my own going up to the Levant, which will occur to you.

¹ A member of the Greek Committee, who was sent out to Greece to report on the situation.

² Phormio (cf. Cicero *de Oratore*, II, 18).

³ Lord Sydney Godolphin Osborne, Treasurer and Secretary to the Senate at Corfu.

My health, though pretty good, is not quite the same as when it subdued the Olympian malaria in 1810 ; and the unsettled state of my lawsuit with Mr. Deardon¹ and the affairs still in Hanson's hands tend to keep me nearer home.

Also you may imagine that the " absurd woman-kind," as Monkbarns² calls them, are by no means favourable to such an enterprise. Madame Guiccioli is of course, and naturally enough, opposed to my quitting her ; though but for a few months ; and as she had influence enough to prevent my return to England in 1819, she may be not less successful in detaining me from Greece in 1823. Her brother, Count Gamba the younger, who is a very fine, spirited young fellow—as Blaquièrè will tell you—is of a very different opinion, and ever since the ruin of Italian hopes in 1820, has been eager to go to Spain, or to Greece, and very desirous to accompany me to one or other of those countries ; or at any rate to go himself. I wish you had seen him, you would have found a very different person from the usual run of young Italians.

With regard to my peculium. I am pretty well off ; I have still a surplus of three thousand pounds of last year's income ; a thousand pounds in Exchequer bills in England, and by this time, as also in July, there ought to be further monies paid to my account in Kinnaird's bank.

From literary matters I know not if anything will be produced ; but even out of my own, Kinnaird will, I suppose, furnish me with a further credit if I should require it, since all my receipts will pass through his hands.

¹ James Dearden, lessee of the Rochdale coal-pits.

² *The Antiquary*.

You must be aware that it would not do to go without means into a country where means are so much wanted ; and that I should not like to be an incumbrance, go where I would. Now I wish to know whether *there* or (if that should not take place) *here* I can do anything, by correspondence or otherwise, to forward the objects of the well-wishers of the Hellenic struggle. Will *you* state this to them, and desire them to command me, if they think it could be of any service.? Of course, I must in no way interfere with Blaquièrè, so as to give him umbrage ; or to any other person. I have great doubts, not of my own inclination, but from the circumstances already stated, whether I shall be able to go up myself, as I fain would do ; but Blaquièrè seemed to think that I might be of some use even *here*, though *what* he did not specify. If there were any things which you wished to have forwarded to the Greeks—as surgeon's medicines, powder, and swivels, &c., of which they tell me that they are in want—you would find me ready to follow any directions, and what is more to the purpose, to contribute my own share to the expense.

Will you let me hear from you, at any rate, your opinion ; and believe me,

Ever yours,

N.B.

P.S. You may show this letter to Douglas Kinnaird, or to anyone you please, including such members of the committee as you think proper, and explain to them that I shall confine myself to following their directions, if they give me any instructions. My uncertainty as to whether *I* can so manage as to go *personally* prevents me from being more explicit (I hear

that strangers are not very welcome to the Greeks, from jealousy), except as far as regards anything I might be able to do *here*, by obtaining good information, or affording assistance.

98. *To the Count D'Orsay*

April 22, 1823.

MY DEAR COUNT D'ORSAY (if you will permit me to address you so familiarly), you should be content with writing in your own language, like Gramont,¹ and succeeding in London as nobody has succeeded since the days of Charles the Second and the records of Antonio Hamilton, without deviating into our barbarous language,—which you understand and write, however, much better than it deserves.

My “approbation,”² as you are pleased to term it, was very sincere, but perhaps not very impartial; for, though I love my country, I do not love my countrymen—at least, such as they now are. And, besides the seduction of talent and wit in your work, I fear that to me there was the attraction of vengeance. I have *seen* and *felt* much of what you have described so well. I have known the persons, and the re-unions so described,—(many of them, that is to say,) and the portraits are so like that I cannot but admire the painter no less than his performance.

But I am sorry for you; for if you are so well acquainted with life at your age,³ what will become of you when the illusion is still more dissipated? But never mind—*en avant!*—live while you can;

¹ The author of *Mémoires de la Vie du Comte de Gramont* (1713) was Anthony Hamilton.

² Of D'Orsay's *Journal*.

³ Twenty-two.

and that you may have the full enjoyment of the many advantages of youth, talent, and figure, which you possess, is the wish of an—Englishman,—I suppose, but it is no treason ; for my mother was Scotch, and my name and my family are both Norman ; and as for myself, I am of no country. As for my “ Works,” which you are pleased to mention, let them go to the Devil, from whence (if you believe many persons) they came.

I have the honour to be your obliged, etc., etc.

99. *To John Bowring*¹

GENOA, May 12, 1823.

SIR,—I have great pleasure in acknowledging your letter, and the honour which the Committee have done me :—I shall endeavour to deserve their confidence by every means in my power. My first wish is to go up into the Levant in person, where I might be enabled to advance, if not the cause, at least the means of obtaining information which the Committee might be desirous of acting upon ; and my former residence in the country, my familiarity with the Italian language, (which is there universally spoken, or at least to the same extent as French in the more polished parts of the Continent,) and my *not* total ignorance of the Romaic, would afford me some advantages of experience. To this project the only objection is of a domestic nature, and I shall try to get over it ;—if I fail in this, I must do what I can where I am ; but it will be always a source of regret to me, to think that I might perhaps have done more for the cause on the spot.

¹ Afterwards Sir John Bowring : linguist, writer, and traveller ; Secretary to the Greek Committee.

Our last information of Captain Blaqui re is from Ancona, where he embarked with a fair wind for Corfu, on the 15th ult.; he is now probably at his destination. My last letter *from* him personally was dated Rome; he had been refused a passport through the Neapolitan territory, and returned to strike up through Romagna for Ancona:—little time, however, appears to have been lost by the delay.

The principal material wanted by the Greeks appears to be, first, a park of field artillery—light, and fit for mountain-service; secondly, gunpowder; thirdly, hospital or medical stores. The readiest mode of transmission is, I hear, by Idra, addressed to Mr. Negri,¹ the minister. I meant to send up a certain quantity of the two latter—no great deal—but enough for an individual to show his good wishes for the Greek success,—but am pausing, because, in case I should go myself, I can take them with me. I do not want to limit my own contribution to this merely, but more especially, if I can get to Greece myself, I should devote whatever resources I can muster of my own, to advancing the great object. I am in correspondence with Signor Nicolas Karrellas (well known to Mr. Hobhouse), who is now at Pisa; but his latest advice merely stated, that the Greeks are at present employed in organising their *internal* government, and the details of its administration: this would seem to indicate *security*, but the war is however far from being terminated.

The Turks are an obstinate race, as all former

¹ Theodore Negris, Ottoman Charg  d’Affaires at Paris. He afterwards joined the insurgents.

wars have proved them, and will return to the charge for years to come, even if beaten, as it is to be hoped they will be. But in no case can the labours of the Committee be said to be in vain ; for in the event even of the Greeks being subdued, and dispersed, the funds which could be employed in succouring and gathering together the remnant, so as to alleviate in part their distresses, and enable them to find or make a country (as so many emigrants of other nations have been compelled to do), would “ bless both those who gave and those who took,”¹ as the bounty both of justice and of mercy.

With regard to the formation of a brigade, (which Mr. Hobhouse hints at in his short letter of this day’s receipt, enclosing the one to which I have the honour to reply,) I would presume to suggest—but merely as an opinion, resulting rather from the melancholy experience of the brigades embarked in the Columbian service² than from any experiment yet fairly tried in GREECE,—that the attention of the Committee had better perhaps be directed to the employment of *officers* of experience than the enrolment of *raw British* soldiers, which latter are apt to be unruly, and not very serviceable, in irregular warfare, by the side of foreigners. A small body of good officers, especially artillery ; an engineer, with quantity (such as the Committee might deem requisite) of stores of the nature which Captain Blaquièrè indicated as most wanted, would, I should conceive, be a highly useful accession. Officers, also, who had previously served in the

¹ *Merchant of Venice*, IV, i, 185.

² In 1819 New Grenada and Venezuela united as the Republic of Columbia.

Mediterranean would be preferable, as some knowledge of Italian is nearly indispensable.

It would also be as well that they should be aware, that they are not going "to rough it on a beef-steak and bottle of port,"—but that Greece—never, of late years, very plentifully stocked for a *mess*—is at present the country of all kinds of *privations*. This remark may seem superfluous; but I have been led to it, by observing that many *foreign* officers, Italian, French, and even Germans (but *fewer* of the *latter*), have returned in disgust, imagining either that they were going up to make a party of pleasure, or to enjoy full pay, speedy promotion, and a very moderate degree of duty. They complain, too, of having been ill received by the Government or inhabitants; but numbers of these complainants were mere adventurers, attracted by a hope of command and plunder, and disappointed of both. Those Greeks I have seen strenuously deny the charge of inhospitality, and declare that they shared their pittance to the last crum with their foreign volunteers.

I need not suggest to the Committee the very great advantage which must accrue to Great Britain from the success of the Greeks, and their probable commercial relations with England in consequence; because I feel persuaded that the first object of the Committee is their EMANCIPATION, without any interested views. But the consideration might weigh with the English people in general, in their present passion for every kind of speculation,—they need not cross the American seas for one much better worth their while, and nearer home. The resources even for an emigrant population, in the Greek islands alone, are rarely

to be paralleled ; and the cheapness of every kind of, not *only necessary*, but *luxury*, (that is to say, *luxury of nature*,) fruits, wine, oil, etc., in a state of peace, are far beyond those of the Cape, and Van Diemen's Land, and the other places of refuge, which the English people are searching for over the waters.

I beg that the Committee will command me in any and every way. If I am favoured with any instructions, I shall endeavour to obey them to the letter, whether conformable to my own private opinion or not. I beg leave to add, personally, my respect for the gentleman whom I have the honour of addressing,

And am, Sir, your obliged, etc.

P.S.—The best refutation of Gell¹ will be the active exertions of the Committee ;—I am too warm a controversialist ; and I suspect that if Mr. Hobhouse have taken him in hand, there will be little occasion for me to “encumber him “with help.”² If I go up into the country, I will endeavour to transmit as accurate and impartial an account as circumstances will permit.

I shall write to Mr. Karrellas. I expect intelligence from Captain Blaquièrre, who has promised me some early intimation from the seat of the Provisional Government. I gave him a letter of introduction to Lord Sydney Osborne, at Corfu ; but as Lord S. is in the government service, of course his reception could only be a *cautious* one.

¹ Sir William Gell, in *Narrative of a Journey in the Morea*, urged the advantage to Greece of coming under the dominion of Russia.

² A phrase in Johnson's famous letter to Lord Chesterfield.

100. *To the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird*

GENOA, May 21, 1823.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—I am doing all I can to get away, but I have all kinds of obstacles thrown in my way by the “absurd womankind,” who seems determined on sacrificing herself in every way, and preventing me from doing any good, and all without reason ; for her relations, and her husband (who is moving the Pope and the Government here to get her to live with him again) and everybody, are earnest with her to return to Ravenna. She wants to go up to Greece too ! forsooth, a precious place to go to at present ! Of course the idea is ridiculous, as everything must there be sacrificed to seeing her out of harm’s way. It is a case too, in which interest does not enter, and therefore hard to deal with ; for I have no kind of control in that way, and if she makes a scene (and she has a turn that way) we shall have another romance, and tale of ill-usage, and abandonment, and Lady Carolining, and Lady Byroning, and Glenarvoning, all cut and dry. There never was a man who gave up so much to women, and all I have gained by it has been the character of treating them harshly. However I shall do what I can, and have hopes ; for her father has been recalled from his political exile ; but with this proviso, that he do not return without his daughter. If I left a woman for another woman, she might have cause to complain, but really when a man merely wishes to go on a great duty, for a good cause, this selfishness on the part of the “feminie” is rather too much.

Ever yrs.,

N. B.

101. To Henri Beyle¹

GENOA, May 29, 1823.

SIR,—At present, that I know to whom I am indebted for a very flattering mention in the *Rome, Naples, and Florence*, in 1817, by Mons. Stendhal, it is fit that I should return my thanks (however undesired or undesirable) to Mons. Beyle, with whom I had the honour of being acquainted at Milan, in 1816. You only did me too much honour in what you were pleased to say in that work ; but it has hardly given me less pleasure than the praise itself, to become at length aware (which I have done by mere accident) that I am indebted for it to one of whose good opinion I was really ambitious. So many changes have taken place since that period in the Milan circle, that I hardly dare recur to it ;—some dead, some banished, and some in the Austrian dungeons.—Poor Pellico !² I trust that, in his iron solitude, his Muse is consoling him in part—one to delight us again, when both she and her Poet are restored to freedom.

Of your works I have only seen *Rome*, etc., the *Lives of Haydn and Mozart*, and the *brochure* on Racine and Shakespeare. The *Histoire de la Peinture* I have not yet the good fortune to possess.

There is one part of your observations in the pamphlet which I shall venture to remark upon ;—it regards Walter Scott. You say that “ his character is little worthy of enthusiasm,” at the same time that you mention his productions

¹ Better known by his pseudonym of Stendhal.

² Silvio Pellico, author of *Francesca da Rimini* and other works. He had been one of the founders of a Liberal newspaper, and on the outbreak of the Neapolitan Revolution he was arrested and kept in prison for nine years.

in the manner they deserve. I have known Walter Scott long and well, and in occasional situations which call forth the *real* character—and I can assure you that his character *is* worthy of admiration—that of all men he is the most *open*, the most *honourable*, the most *amiable*. With his politics I have nothing to do: they differ from mine, which renders it difficult for me to speak of them. But he is *perfectly sincere* in them: and Sincerity may be humble, but she cannot be servile. I pray you, therefore, to correct or soften that passage. You may, perhaps, attribute this officiousness of mine to a false affectation of *candour*, as I happen to be a writer also. Attribute it to what motive you please, but *believe the truth*. I say that Walter Scott is as nearly a thorough good man as man can be, because I *know* it by experience to be the case.

If you do me the honour of an answer, may I request a speedy one?—because it is possible (though not yet decided) that circumstances may conduct me once more to Greece. My present address is Genoa, where an answer will reach me in a short time, or be forwarded to me wherever I may be.

I beg you to believe me, with a lively recollection of our brief acquaintance, and the hope of one day renewing it,

Your ever obliged

And obedient humble servant,

NOEL BYRON.

Edward John Trelawny, to whom the following letter is written, had been introduced to Byron by Shelley at Pisa in 1821. After the accident to the *Ariel* in which Shelley was drowned, he

organized the search for the bodies ; arranged the cremation ; deposited Shelley's ashes in the English Cemetery at Rome (in a tomb beside which his own are now buried) ; and helped Mary Shelley with money out of his slender means. He lived until 1881, to be one of the last links between Shelley and Byron and the middle Victorian age. He sat for the old mariner in Millais' picture, "The North-West Passage ;" was introduced into one of Landor's *Conversations* ; and was the prototype of "The Old Buccaneer" in Meredith's *Amazing Marriage*.

As a youth he had deserted from a ship in which he was a midshipman, and taken service in a privateer under the French flag. An account of his life at that period is given in his *Adventures of a Younger Son*, one of the most stirring books of adventure ever written. In middle life he published *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron*—a vivid, and on the whole a faithful and valuable, record—whole-hearted in its devotion to the memory of Shelley, though disfigured by an unkindly spirit towards Byron. Detractors of Byron have suggested that the latter was jealous of Trelawny as "a man of action." There is no evidence of this, and it is at least equally probable that Trelawny felt some jealousy for the celebrity and brilliance of Byron. On the other hand, admirers of Byron when dealing with Trelawny (including one of the latter's most recent editors) have sometimes displayed unpleasant animus by acrimonious detraction of Trelawny.

102. *To Edward John Trelawny**June 15, 1823.*

MY DEAR T.,—You must have heard that I am going to Greece. Why do you not come to me? I want your aid, and am exceedingly anxious to see you. Pray come, for I am at last determined to go to Greece; it is the only place I was ever contented in. I am serious, and did not write before, as I might have given you a journey for nothing; they all say I can be of use in Greece. I do not know how, nor do they; but at all events let us go.

Yours, etc., truly,

N. BYRON.

103. *To Leigh Hunt**June 28, 1823.*

There was something about a legacy of two thousand pounds which he¹ has left me. This, of course, I decline, and the more so that I hear that his will is admitted valid; and I state this distinctly, that—in case of anything happening to me—my heirs may be instructed not to claim it.

Yours ever most truly,

N. B.

104. *To John Bowring**July 7, 1823.*

We sail on the 12th for Greece—I have had a letter from Mr. Blaquièrè, too long for present transcription, but very satisfactory. The Greek Government expects me without delay.

In conformity to the desires of Mr. B. and other correspondents in Greece, I have to suggest, with all deference to the Committee, that a re-

¹ Shelley.

mittance of even "ten thousand pounds only" (Mr. B.'s expression) would be of the greatest service to the Greek Government at present. I have also to recommend strongly the attempts of a loan, for which there will be offered a sufficient security by deputies now on their way to England. In the mean time, I hope that the Committee will be enabled to do something effectual.

For my own part, I mean to carry up, in cash or credits, above eight, and nearly nine thousand pounds sterling, which I am enabled to do by funds I have in Italy, and credits in England. Of this sum I must necessarily reserve a portion for the subsistence of myself and suite; the rest I am willing to apply in the manner which seems most likely to be useful to the cause—having of course some guarantee or assurance, that it will not be misapplied to any individual speculation.

If I remain in Greece, which will mainly depend upon the presumed probable utility of my presence there, and of the opinion of the Greeks themselves as to its propriety—in short, if I am welcome to them, I shall continue, during my residence at least, to apply such portions of my income, present and future, as may forward the object—that is to say, what I can spare for that purpose. Privations I can, or at least could once, bear—abstinence I am accustomed to—and as to fatigue, I was once a tolerable traveller. What I may be now, I cannot tell—but I will try.

I await the commands of the Committee.—Address to Genoa—the letters will be forwarded me, wherever I may be, by my bankers, Messrs. Webb and Barry. It would have given me pleasure to have had some more *defined* instructions before I went; but these, of course, rest at

the option of the Committee. I have the honour to be,

Yours obediently, etc.

P.S.—Great anxiety is expressed for a printing press and types etc. I have not the time to provide them, but recommend this to the notice of the Committee. I presume the types must, partly at least, be *Greek*: they wish to publish papers, and perhaps a Journal, probably in Romaic, with Italian translations.

105. *To Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

LEGHORN, July 24, 1823.

ILLUSTRIOUS SIR,—I cannot thank you as you ought to be thanked for the lines¹ which my young friend, Mr. Sterling, sent me of yours; and it would but ill become me to pretend to exchange verses with him who, for fifty years, has been the undisputed sovereign of European literature. You must therefore accept my most sincere acknowledgments in prose—and in hasty prose too; for I am at present on my voyage to Greece once more, and surrounded by hurry and bustle, which hardly allow a moment even to gratitude and admiration to express themselves.

I sailed from Genoa some days ago, was driven back by a gale of wind, and have since sailed again and arrived here, “Leghorn,” this morning, to receive on board some Greek passengers for their struggling country.

Here also I found your lines and Mr. Sterling’s letter, and I could not have had a more favourable omen, a more agreeable surprise, than a word of Goethe, written by his own hand.

¹ Three stanzas written by Goethe to Byron, who had dedicated *Werner* to him.

I am returning to Greece, to see if I can be of any little use there : if ever I come back, I will pay a visit to Weimar, to offer the sincere homage of one of the many millions of your admirers. I have the honour to be, ever and most respectfully, your

Obliged admirer and servant, NOEL BYRON.

After a short stay at Leghorn, where a Mr. Hamilton Browne was taken on board, Byron set sail for the Ionian Islands. These were under the protection of Britain, and Byron decided to go first to Cephalonia, where the Resident Commissioner, Col. Napier (the future conqueror of Scinde), was known to be favourable to the Greek cause. On reaching Cephalonia, Byron made a stay at the village of Metaxata. Here he met Napier, and was visited by Col. Stanhope (afterwards Lord Harrington), who had given his services to the Greek Committee, and by Lord Sydney Godolphin Osborne, Treasurer to the Senate of Corfu.

In September Trelawny left for Athens to join Odysseus, the chief of the Eastern Greeks, and never again saw Byron alive. Byron realised that the success of the movement was being endangered by rival factions. His judgment of the general situation was remarkable for its strong sense, though his freedom from illusions did not damp his zeal. At last, sick of inaction, towards the end of December, he decided to move to Missolonghi, and co-operate there with Mavrocordato, leader of the Western Greeks.

106. *To John Cam Hobhouse*METAXATA, *September 11, 1823.*

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—This letter will be delivered by Captain Scott, of the “Hercules,” who brought me up into these parts, and has behaved very well. He is a fine tough old tar, and has been a great amusement during our voyage; he is moreover brother to two of your constituents, and as such to be treated with all due respect, also some grog with which he regularly rounds off most hours of the four and twenty. He is a character I assure you, as you will perceive at a single glance.

I have received your, and the committee's letters, to both of which this will serve for present answer. I will endeavour to do my duty by the committee, and the cause.

On our arrival here, early in August, we found the opposite coast blockaded by the Turkish fleet. All kinds of reports in circulation about divisions amongst the Greeks themselves—the Greek fleet not out (and it is not out yet as far as I know)—Blaquière gone home again; or at least on his way there, and no communications for me from the Morea or elsewhere. Under these circumstances, added to the disinclination of Captain Scott (naturally enough) to risk his vessel among the blockaders, or their vicinity, without being insured for the full value of his bastimento, I resolved to remain here for a favourable opportunity of passing over; and also to collect, if possible, something like positive information.

In the meantime, I made a tour over the hills here in our old style, and then crossed over to

Ithaca, which as a pendant to the Troad, a former Greek traveller would like to see. I was much gratified by both ; and we have, moreover, been treated in the kindest manner by all the authorities, military and civil, from Colonel Napier, the resident (whose name and fame you are aware of), the officers of the 8th, and in short by all our own countrymen.

Their hospitality both here and in Ithaca was indeed rather impressive : for dinners kill a weakly-stomached gentleman. They also insisted on lodging us, but I would not so far abuse their good nature, and am here in a very pretty village, between the mountains and the sea, waiting what Napoleon calls the " March of Events." The events, however, keep their march somewhat secret, but it appears nearly certain that there be divisions ; and that Mavrocordato is *out* (some say *in* again) which were a pity, since he is the only civilised person (*on dit*) amongst the liberators.

The Turkish fleet has sailed, leaving fifteen Algerine vessels to cruise in the Gulph.

Mr. Browne and Mr. Trelawny are since then gone over in a boat, to a part of the coast out of blockade, with letters from me to the Greek government at Tripolitza ; and to collect information. There is little risk for small boats ; but it is otherwise with larger vessels, which cannot slide in everywhere, as the Mussulmans are not very particular. Count Gamba, a young man about twenty-three, is here with me, and is very popular amongst the English ; and is, I assure you, a fine fellow in all respects. I have written to apprise the Greek government of the probable approach of the vessel indicated by the committee ;

and prepare them to receive its continents. I wrote, soon after my arrival, to Marco Bozzari, in Acarnania, and at a considerable expense sent the letter by a small boat which ran through the blockade. He answered, desiring me to come over, and stated that he meant to give battle to the Turks next day (after the date of his epistle), which he did, and was killed, but his party gained the victory; and he behaved most gallantly, by all accounts, till mortally wounded. This was very vexatious on all accounts, as well for the general loss of the individual, for I was particularly recommended to him (the chief of the Suliotes), and I cannot have the same confidence in his successor, who is less known.

I took forty Suliotes¹ here into pay; got their arms (through Colonel Napier's intercession with General Adam) and sent them to join their countrymen a few days ago, when the blockade was partly done away with. They have cost me a tolerable number in dollars, and the price of their passage (somewhat high), &c., but it was thought best that I should wait for directions from Tripolitza, before I fixed on the place where I ought to proceed with the approbation of the Greek Government.

I have also spent some hundred dollars in assisting the Greek refugees in Ithaca, and providing for a Moriote family, who were in great distress.

The Turks are in force in Acarnania, but you cannot depend upon any *accounts*. The report of the day is contradicted on the morrow. Great divisions and difficulties exist; and several

¹ A military caste of Albanians.

foreigners have come away in disgust, as usual. It is at present my intention to remain *here*, or *there*, as long as I see a prospect of advantage to the cause ; but I must not conceal from you, and the committee, that the Greeks appear in more danger from their own divisions than from the attacks of the enemy. There is a talk of treachery, and all sorts of parties amongst them ; a jealousy of strangers, and a desire of nothing but *money*. All improvements in tactics they decline, and are not very kind, it is said, to the foreign officers, &c., in their service.

I give you this as report, but certainly I cannot say much for those I have seen here ; the slave is not yet improved by his Saturnalia. As you are aware what they were before, I need say little on the subject.

Pray write and say how you are. I am better for my voyage, and stood the hot sun on the hills of this island, and of Ithaca, like a dial.

Ever yours, most truly,

N. B.

September 14th, 1823.

P.S. I have sent over to Missolonghi some medical stores for the wounded there. Mataxa (the commandant of the town) is very pressing that I should go over there ; but I must first have an answer from the Tripolitza government, and also keep a look out for the arrival of the committee's vessel. When these things are settled, I may as well be in one place as another I suppose, though I have as little cunning in fortifying a besieged town as "honour hath skill in surgery."¹

Colonel Napier told me yesterday that there is a story in the island Corfu, &c., "that he and I

¹ *Henry IV, First Part, V, i, 134.*

“ had a quarrel about *arms* on board my vessel, that “ it was seized after some resistance or opposition, “ &c., &c., &c.,” in short, a damned lie ; which I merely mention that you may contradict, and laugh at it, if you hear anything of the kind. Napier says if his commission could be saved to him that he would go over too. You know he is a famous soldier, one of Sir John Moore’s “ Well “ done, my Majors ! ” left for dead at Corunna, and all alive and martial at this moment. He is besides an excellent fellow, greatly liked, and a thorough Liberal. He wishes me to state to the committee, *quietly*, recollect, his wish to have some communication with them. He would be just the man for a *Chef*, if it could be managed.

107. *To the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird*

CEPHALÓNIA, 8^{bre} 29th, 1823.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—I have sent to Hobhouse various documents and dispatches, from which he can furnish the proper information to the committee. The Greek government have invited me to Napoli di Romania, and I expect to proceed there in November. You had better address to me by Genoa (to Messrs. Webb and Barry). My letters reach me sooner through that channel, as vessels sail frequently.

I shall take your advice about the reverend care of my purse and person, as far as is consistent with propriety. The former has not yet suffered much, having only been lightened of about a thousand dollars, partly an aid to the Suliotes, and partly to some of the refugees, and also some expenses for sending boats with dispatches, &c., and the latter is for the present in tolerable plight.

You, gentlemen of the committee, must exert yourselves, and I will second you as well as I can ; but your newspaper accounts are highly exaggerated, for neither Turks nor Greeks have done much this year. I shall continue to state things to you all exactly as they are, or appear to me, and the best way *not* to despond is perhaps to commence with not being over-sanguine. The cause is good, and I think eventually *safe* (if the Holy Alliance leave the Greeks to themselves), and I am inclined to believe that the committee may be of essential service in forwarding supplies, or monies, and obtaining a loan for the Independents ; but there is still a good deal to be done, and more than is imagined in your part of the world, for proof (or at least assertions) of which I refer you to high authorities amongst the Greeks themselves, transmitted to me by Hobhouse.

Ld. Sydney Osborne came over yesterday from Corfu to meet me ; and I dine with the Government Resident, Col. Napier, to-day to meet him. He came up (i.e. Ld. S.) to Metaxata, where I now am, yesterday, and we had a luncheon, and some talk together. I then rode back with him towards Argostoli.

He is in good preservation, and as clever and *insouciant* as ever. He tells me that Alvanley¹ is at length "rectus in curia" with his creditors, and in possession of his long expected uncle's property. Tell him that I have discovered a text in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, chapter X. of such unimpeachable veracity, that I have been converted into a firm believer of all the rest. It is this (vide chapter X.) "*For there is no difference between the JEW and the GREEK,*" these

¹ Lord Alvanley, a well-known wit and spendthrift.

are the literal words, and what is more to the purpose, the literal truth. Some of their bankers tried to make me pay interest for *my own money* in my *own possession*, which I came to spend, for their cause, too ! and this I think equals or beats the tribes of Israel, unless perhaps the *ten*, who are still supposed to exist in the heart of Asia. But I “sorted them I trow,”¹ having the staff for the present in my own hands.

Believe me truly your affectionate N. B.

P.S. I hope you have retained the best counsel for the Hunts,² have you received the 12th Co. of D. J.³ sent on the 14th 10bre 1822 ? I do not know what security we can have for Hunt’s accounting for the profits but he has a property in the *Examiner*. A fair account of profit or loss would perhaps be the better way, supposing it to be accurately stated.

I have had a letter from my sister, wishing me *not* to leave anything by my will to *her* children ! ! I do not know if I mentioned to you a similar circumstance ; when Allegra died I was going to leave the five thousand pounds which I had originally bequeathed to that infant to Madame La Comtesse Guiccioli, which she declined in the most positive, and indeed, displeased terms, declaring that she should consider such a bequest as not only an injustice to my daughter by Lady B., and to my sister’s family, but as a posthumous insult to herself, and persisted so, that I have been obliged to leave my will as it was. Is not

¹ *The Antiquary*, ch. xiv.

² John Hunt, brother of Leigh Hunt, was prosecuted, and eventually fined, for publishing Byron’s *Vision of Judgement*. He also published the later cantos of *Don Juan*.

³ Canto XII of *Don Juan*.

this odd? *Two women* of different countries concurring upon the same point! It is true that Madame G. has her separate allowance (by the Pope's decree) from her husband, and will have a considerable jointure at his demise, but it is not unhandsome conduct nevertheless.

108. *To the General Government of Greece*

CEPHALONIA, November 30, 1823.

The affair of the Loan, the expectations so long and vainly indulged of the arrival of the Greek fleet, and the danger to which Missolonghi is still exposed, have detained me here, and will still detain me till some of them are removed. But when the money shall be advanced for the fleet, I will start for the Morea: not knowing, however, of what use my presence can be in the present state of things. We have heard some rumours of new dissensions, nay, of the existence of a civil war. With all my heart I pray that these reports may be false or exaggerated, for I can imagine no calamity more serious than this; and I must frankly confess that unless union and order are established, all hopes of a Loan will be vain; and all the assistance which the Greeks could expect from abroad—and assistance neither trifling nor worthless—will be suspended or destroyed; and, what is worse, the great powers of Europe, of whom no one was an enemy to Greece, but seemed to favour her establishment of an independent power, will be persuaded that the Greeks are unable to govern themselves, and will, perhaps, themselves undertake to settle your disorders in such a way as to blast the brightest hopes of yourselves and of your friends.

Allow me to add, once for all,—I desire the well-being of Greece, and nothing else ; I will do all I can to secure it : but I cannot consent, I never will consent, that the English public, or English individuals, should be deceived as to the real state of Greek affairs. The rest, Gentlemen, depends on you. You have fought gloriously ;—act honourably towards your fellow-citizens and the world, and it will then no more be said, as has been repeated for two thousand years with the Roman historians, that Philopœmen¹ was the last of the Grecians. Let not calumny itself (and it is difficult, I own, to guard against it in so arduous a struggle) compare the patriot Greek, when resting from his labours, to the Turkish pacha, whom his victories have exterminated.

I pray you to accept these my sentiments as a sincere proof of my attachment to your real interests, and to believe that I am and always shall be

Yours, etc.

109. *To the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird*

CEPHALONIA, December 23, 1823.

MY DEAR DOUGLAS,—I shall be as saving of my purse and person as you recommend : but you know that it is as well to be in readiness with one or both in the event of either being required.

I presume that some agreement has been concluded with Mr. Murray about *Werner*. Although the copyright should only be worth two or three hundred pounds, I will tell you what can be done with them. For three hundred pounds I can maintain in Greece, at more than the *fullest pay*

¹ Plutarch, *Philopoemen*, ch. i.

of the Provisional Government, rations included, one hundred armed men for *three months*. You may judge of this when I tell you, that the four thousand pounds advanced by me to the Greeks is likely to set a fleet and an army in motion for some months.

A Greek vessel has arrived from the squadron to convey me to Missolonghi, where Mavrocordato now is, and has assumed the command, so that I expect to embark immediately. Still address, however, to Cephalonia, through Messrs. Webb and Barry of Genoa, as usual ; and get together all the means and credit of mine you can, to face the war establishment, for it is "in for a penny, "in for a pound," and I must do all I can for the ancients.

I have been labouring to reconcile these parties, and there is *now* some hope of succeeding. Their public affairs go on well. The Turks have retreated from Acarnania without a battle, after a few fruitless attempts on Anatoliko. Corinth is taken, and the Greeks have gained a battle in the Archipelago. The squadron here, too, has taken a Turkish corvette with some money and a cargo. In short, if they can obtain a Loan, I am of opinion that matters will assume and preserve a steady and favourable aspect for their independence.

In the mean time I stand paymaster, and what not ; and lucky it is that, from the nature of the warfare and of the country, the resources even of an individual can be of a partial and temporary service.

Colonel Stanhope is at Missolonghi. Probably we shall attempt Patras next. The Suliotes, who are friends of mine, seem anxious to have me with

them, and so is Mavrocordato. If I can but succeed in reconciling the two parties (and I have left no stone unturned), it will be something; and if not, we must go over to the Morea with the Western Greeks—who are the bravest, and at present the strongest, having beaten back the Turks—and try the effect of a little *physical* advice, should they persist in rejecting *moral* persuasion.

Once more recommending to you the reinforcement of my strong box and credit from all lawful sources and resources of mine to their practicable extent—for, after all, it is better playing at nations than gaming at Almack's or Newmarket—and requesting you to write to me as often as you can,

I remain ever yours,

N. B.

110. To Thomas Moore

CEPHALONIA, December 27, 1823.

I received a letter from you some time ago. I have been too much employed latterly to write as I could wish, and even now must write in haste.

I embark for Missolonghi to join Mavrocordato in four-and-twenty hours. The state of parties (but it were a long story) has kept me here till *now*; but now that Mavrocordato (their Washington, or their Kosciusko) is employed again, I can act with a *safe conscience*. I carry money to pay the squadron, etc., and I have influence with the Suliotes, *supposed* sufficient to keep them in harmony with some of the dissentients;—for there are plenty of differences, but trifling.

It is imagined that we shall attempt either

Patras or the castles on the Straits ; and it seems, by most accounts, that the Greeks, at any rate the Suliotes, who are in affinity with me of " bread and salt,"—expect that I should march with them, and—be it even so ! If any thing in the way of fever, fatigue, famine, or otherwise, should cut short the middle age of a brother warbler,—like Garcilasso de la Vega, Kleist, Korner, Zhukovsky (a Russian nightingale—see Bowring's *Anthology*), or Thersander,¹ or,—or somebody else—but never mind—I pray you to remember me in your " smiles and wine." ²

I have hopes that the cause shall triumph ; but whether it does or no, still " honour must be " minded as strictly as milk diet." I trust to observe both.

Ever, etc.

III. To John Cam Hobhouse

10^{bre} 27th, 1823.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I embark for Missolonghi. Douglas Kinnaird and Bowring can tell you the rest. I particularly require and entreat you to desire Douglas Kinnaird to send me credits to the uttermost, that I may get the Greeks to keep the field. Never mind *me*, so that the *cause goes on* ; if that is well, all is well. Douglas must send me *my money* (Rochdale Manor included, if the sale is completed,³ and the purchase money paid) ; the Committee must furnish *their money*,

¹ All died from wounds received in battle—de la Vega in 1536 ; von Kleist in 1759 ; Körner in 1813 ; Zhukovsky (whose *Minstrel* was translated by Bowring in *Specimens of the Russian Poets*) in 1851 ; Thersander in the Trojan War.

² Cf. Moore's " Legacy."

³ It was sold that year.

and the monied people *theirs* ; with these we will soon have men enough, and all that.

Yrs. ever,

N. B.

P.S. Mavrocordato's letter says, that my presence will "*electrify* the troops," so I am going over to "*electrify*" the Suliotes, as George Primrose went to Holland "to teach the Dutch "English, who were fond of it to distraction."¹

On Dec. 28 Byron sailed for Missolonghi. On the voyage his boat had to take refuge behind some rocks from a Turkish man-of-war. The ship in which Gamba was sailing was captured. Gun-boats were sent to Byron's aid, and he reached Missolonghi.

Missolonghi, with its swamps, soon had an effect on his health. But he met thickening difficulties with firmness and judgment. He took into his pay five hundred Suliotes, and an expedition against Lepanto was contemplated. The Suliotes, however, became mutinous. On one occasion, while Byron was still suffering from the effects of a seizure (which he describes on page 287), a tumultuous mob of them broke into his room. Byron quelled them. Eventually they had to be dismissed with a month's wages.

The Revolutionary Government offered to appoint Byron Governor-General of Greece, but he declined until a meeting between Mavrocordato and Odysseus that had been arranged for March 19 had been held. Meanwhile he

¹ *Vicar of Wakefield*, ch. xx.

had been urged by his friends to leave Missolonghi, as the place was a fever trap. He replied that he felt bound to stay while he could: "There is "a stake worth millions such as I am."

112. *To Col. the Hon. Leicester Stanhope*

SCROFER (or some such name), on board a

Cephaloniote Mistico,¹ Dec. 31, 1823.

MY DEAR STANHOPE,—We are just arrived here, that is, part of my people and I, with some things, etc., and which it may be as well not to specify in a letter (which has a risk of being intercepted, perhaps);—but Gamba, and my horses, negro, steward, and the press, and all the Committee things, also some eight thousand dollars of mine, (but never mind, we have more left, do you understand?) are taken by the Turkish frigates, and my party and myself, in another boat, have had a narrow escape last night (being close under their stern and hailed, but we would not answer, and bore away), as well as this morning. Here we are, with the sun and clearing weather, within a pretty little port enough; but whether our Turkish friends may not send in their boats and take us out (for we have no arms except two carbines and some pistols, and I suspect, not more than four fighting people on board), is another question, especially if we remain long here, since we are blocked out of Missolonghi by the direct entrance.

You had better send my friend George Drake (Draco), and a body of Suliotes, to escort us by land or by the canals, with all convenient speed.

¹ A long, sharp, shallow-built boat, for sailing or rowing, with one or more guns

Gamba and our Bombard¹ are taken into Patras, I suppose; and we must take a turn at the Turks to get them out: but where the devil is the fleet gone?—the Greek, I mean; leaving us to get in without the least intimation to take heed that the Moslems were out again.

Make my respects to Mavrocordato, and say that I am here at his disposal. I am uneasy at being here: not so much on my own account as on that of a Greek boy with me, for you know what his fate would be; and I would sooner cut him in pieces, and myself too, than have him taken out by those barbarians. We are all very well.

N. B.

The Bombard was twelve miles out when taken; at least, so it appeared to us (if taken she actually be, for it is not certain); and we had to escape from another vessel that stood right between us and the port.

113. *To Charles Hancock*²

MISSOLOGHI, *January 13, 1824.*

DEAR SIR,—Many thanks for yours of the fifth; ditto to Muir³ for his. You will have heard that Gamba and my vessel got out of the hands of the Turks safe and intact; nobody knows well how or why, for there is a mystery in the story somewhat melodramatic. Captain Valsamachi has, I take it, spun a long yarn by this time in Argostoli. I attribute their release en-

¹ Bomb-vessel.

² Of Messrs. Barff and Hancock, bankers of Zante and Argostoli.

³ Health Officer of Argostoli.

tirely to Saint Dionysius, of Zante, and the Madonna of the Rock, near Cephalonia.¹

The adventures of my separate bark were also not finished at Dragomestri: we were convoyed out by some Greek gun-boats, and found the *Leonidas*, brig-of-war, at sea to look after us. But blowing weather coming on, we were driven on the rocks *twice* in the passage of the Scrofes, and the dollars had another narrow escape. Two-thirds of the crew got ashore over the bowsprit: the rocks were rugged enough, but water very deep close in-shore, so that she was, after much swearing and some exertion, got off again, and away we went with a third of our crew, leaving the rest on a desolate island, where they might have been now, had not one of the gun-boats taken them off, for we were in no condition to take them off again.

Tell Muir that Dr. Bruno did not show much fight on the occasion; for besides stripping to his flannel waistcoat, and running about like a rat in an emergency, when I was talking to a Greek boy (the brother of the Greek girls in Argostoli), and telling him the fact that there was no danger for the passengers, whatever there might be for the vessel, and assuring him I could save both him and myself without difficulty (though he can't swim), as the water, though deep, was not very rough—the wind *not* blowing *right* on shore (it was a blunder of the Greeks who missed stays),—the Doctor exclaimed, "Save *him*, indeed!" "by G—d! save *me* rather—I'll be first if I can"

¹ The explanation was that the captain of the Turkish frigate had had his life saved in the Black Sea by Valsamarchi, the captain of the Bombard.

—a piece of egotism which he pronounced with such emphatic simplicity as to set all who had leisure to hear him laughing, and in a minute after the vessel drove off again after striking twice. She sprang a small leak, but nothing further happened, except that the captain was very nervous afterwards.

To be brief, we had bad weather almost always, though not contrary; slept on deck in the wet generally for seven or eight nights, but never was in better health (I speak personally)—so much so that I actually bathed for a quarter of an hour on the evening of the 4th instant in the sea (to kill the fleas, and others, etc.), and was all the better for it.

We were received at Missolonghi with all kinds of kindness and honours; and the sight of the fleet saluting, etc., and the crowds and different costumes was really picturesque. We think of undertaking an expedition soon, and I expect to be ordered with the Suliotes to join the army.

All well at present. We found Gamba already arrived, and every thing in good condition. Remembrance to all friends.

Yours ever,

N. B.

P.S.—You will, I hope, use every exertion to realise the *assets*. For besides what I have already advanced, I have undertaken to maintain the Suliotes for a year, (and will accompany them either as a Chief, or——¹ whichever is most agreeable to the Government,) besides sundries. I do not understand Browne's "*letter of credit*." I neither gave nor ordered a letter of credit that I know of; and though of course, if you have

¹ Word illegible.

done it, I will be responsible, I was not aware of any thing, except that I would have backed his bills, which you said was unnecessary. As to *orders*—I ordered nothing but some *red cloth* and *oil cloth*, both of which I am ready to receive; but if Gamba has exceeded my commission, *the other things must be sent back, for I cannot permit any thing of the kind, nor will.* The servants' journey will of course be paid for, though *that* is exorbitant. As for Browne's letter; I do not know any thing more than I have said, and I really cannot defray the charges of half Greece and the Frank adventurers besides. Mr. Barff must send us some dollars soon, for the expenses fall on me for the present.

January 14, 1824.

P.S.Al.—Will you tell Saint (Jew) Geronimo Corgialegno that I mean to draw for the balance of my credit with Messrs. Webb and Co. I shall draw for two thousand dollars (that being the amount, more or less); but, to facilitate the business, I shall make the draft payable also at Messrs. Ransom and Co.'s, Pall-Mall East, London. I believe I already showed you my letters, (but if not, I have them to show,) by which, besides the credits now realising, you will have perceived that I am not limited to any particular amount of credit with my bankers. The Honourable Douglas, my friend and trustee, is a principal partner in that house, and having the direction of my affairs, is aware to what extent my present resources may go, and the letters in question were from him. I can merely say, that within the *current* year, 1824, besides the money already advanced to the Greek Government, and the

credits now in your hands and your partner's (Mr. Barff), which are all from the income of 1823, I have anticipated nothing from that of the present year hitherto. I shall or ought to have at my disposition upwards of an hundred thousand dollars, (including my income, and the purchase-money of a manor lately sold,) and perhaps more, without infringing on my income for 1825, and not including the remaining balance of 1823.

Yours ever,

N. B.

EXTRACT FROM " JOURNAL IN CEPHALONIA "

Febry. 15th, 1824.

Upon February 15th—(I write on the 17th of the same month) I had a strong shock of a convulsive description, but whether Epileptic, Paralytic, or Apoplectic, is not yet decided by the two medical men, who attend me ; or whether it be of some other nature (if such there be). It was very painful, and, had it lasted a minute longer, must have extinguished my mortality—if I can judge by sensations. I was speechless with the features much distorted, but *not* foaming at the mouth, they say, and my struggles so violent that several persons—two of whom, Mr. Parry the engineer, and my Servant Tita the Chasseur, are very strong men—could not hold me. It lasted about ten minutes, and came on immediately after drinking a tumbler of Cider mixed with cold water in Col. Stanhope's apartments. This is the first attack that I have had of the kind to the best of my belief. I never heard that any of my family were liable to the same, though my mother was subject to *hysterical* affections.

Yesterday (the 16th) leeches were applied to my

temples. I had previously recovered a good deal, but with some feverish and variable symptoms. I bled profusely, and, as they went too near the temporal artery, there was some difficulty in stopping the blood even with the Lunar Caustic. This, however, after some hours was accomplished about eleven o'clock at night, and this day (the 17th), though weakly, I feel tolerably convalescent.

With regard to the presumed causes of this attack, as far as I know, there might be several. The state of the place and the weather permit little exercise at present. I have been violently agitated with more than one passion recently, and a good deal occupied, politically as well as privately, and amidst conflicting parties, politics, and (as far as regards public matters) circumstances. I have also been in an anxious state with regard to things which may be only interesting to my own private feelings, and, perhaps, not uniformly so temperate as I may generally affirm that I was wont to be. How far any or all of these may have acted on the mind or body of one who had already undergone many previous changes of place and passion during a life of thirty-six years, I cannot tell, nor—— But I am interrupted by the arrival of a report from a party returned from reconnoitring a Turkish Brig of War, just stranded on the Coast, and which is to be attacked the moment we can get some guns to bear upon her. I shall hear what Parry says about it. Here he comes——

114. *To Mr. Mayer*¹

[Undated]

SIR,—Coming to Greece, one of my principal

¹ The English Consul at Prevesa.

objects was to alleviate as much as possible the miseries incident to a warfare so cruel as the present. When the dictates of humanity are in question, I know no difference between Turks and Greeks. It is enough that those who want assistance are men, in order to claim the pity and protection of the meanest pretender to humane feelings. I have found here twenty-four Turks, including women and children, who have long pined in distress, far from the means of support and the consolations of their home. The Government has consigned them to me ; I transmit them to Prevesa, whither they desire to be sent. I hope you will not object to take care that they may be restored to a place of safety, and that the Governor of your town may accept of my present. The best recompense I can hope for would be to find that I had inspired the Ottoman commanders with the same sentiments towards those unhappy Greeks who may hereafter fall into their hands. I beg you to believe me, etc.

N. BYRON.

115. *To Thomas Moore*

MESSOLONGHI, WESTERN GREECE, *March 4, 1824.*

MY DEAR MOORE,—Your reproach is unfounded—I have received two letters from you, and answered both previous to leaving Cephalonia. I have not been “quiet” in an Ionian island, but much occupied with business, as the Greek deputies (if arrived) can tell you. Neither have I continued *Don Juan*, nor any other poem. You go, as usual, I presume, by some newspaper report or other.

When the proper moment to be of some use

arrived, I came here ; and am told that my arrival (with some other circumstances) *has* been of, at least, temporary advantage to the cause. I had a narrow escape from the Turks, and another from shipwreck, on my passage. On the 15th (or 16th) of February I had an attack of apoplexy, or epilepsy,—the physicians have not exactly decided which, but the alternative is agreeable. My constitution, therefore, remains between the two opinions, like Mahomet's sarcophagus between the magnets.¹ All that I can say is, that they nearly bled me to death, by placing the leeches too near the temporal artery, so that the blood could with difficulty be stopped, even with caustic. I am supposed to be getting better, slowly, however. But my homilies will, I presume, for the future, be like the Archbishop of Grenada's—in this case, "I order you a hundred ducats from my treasurer, and wish you a little more taste."²

For public matters I refer you to Colonel Stanhope's and Capt. Parry's reports,—and to all other reports whatsoever. There is plenty to do—war without, and tumult within—they "kill a man a week," like Bob Acres in the country.³ Parry's artificers have gone away in alarm, on account of a dispute in which some of the natives and foreigners were engaged, and a Swede was killed, and a Suliote wounded. In the middle of their fright there was a strong shock of an earthquake ; so, between that and the sword, they boomed off in a hurry, in despite of all dissuasions

¹ An allusion to a legend at one time prevalent that Mahomet's coffin, of iron, was suspended in the air between two lodestones.

² *Gil Blas*, I, iv.

³ *The Rivals*, IV, i.

to the contrary. A Turkish brig run ashore, etc., etc., etc.

You, I presume, are either publishing or meditating that same. Let me hear from and of you, and believe me, in all events,

Ever and affectionately yours, N. B.

P.S.—Tell Mr. Murray that I wrote to him the other day, and hope that he has received, or will receive, the letter.

116. *To Charles F. Barry*¹

April 9th, 1824.

DEAR BARRY,—The Account up to 11th July was 40,541, etc., Genoese livres in my favour: since then I have had a letter of Credit of Messrs. Webb for 60,000 Genoese livres, for which I have drawn; but how the account stands *exactly*, you do not state. The balance will of course be replaced by my London Correspondent, referring more particularly to the Hon^{ble} Douglas Kinnaird, who is also my Agent and trustee, as well as banker, and a friend besides since we were at College together—which is favourable to business, as it gives confidence, or ought to do so.

I had hoped that you had obtained the price of the Schooner² from L^d Blessington: you must really tell him that I must make the affair public, and take other steps which will be agreeable to neither, unless he speedily pays the money, so long due, and contracted by his own headstrong wish to purchase. You *know* how fairly I treated him in the whole affair.

¹ A partner in Messrs. Webb & Co., bankers of Genoa and Leghorn.

² Byron's yacht, the *Bolivar*.

Every thing except the best (*i.e.* the Green travelling Chariot) may be disposed of, and that speedily, as it will assist to balance our accompt. As the Greeks have gotten their loan, they may as well repay mine, which they no longer require : and I request you to forward a copy of the agreement to Mr. Kinnaird, and direct him from me to claim the money from the Deputies. They were welcome to it in their difficulties, and also for good and all, supposing that they had not got out of them ; but, as it is, they can afford repayment, and I assure you that, besides *this*, they have had many “ a strong and long pull ” at my purse, which has been (and still is) disbursing pretty freely in their cause : besides, I shall have to *re-expend* the same monies, having some hundred men under orders, at my own expense, for the Gk. Government and National service.

Of all their proceedings here, health, politics, plans, acts, and deeds, etc.—good or otherwise, Gamba or others will tell you—truly or not truly, according to their habits.

Yours ever,

N. B^N.

The above is, as far as we know, Byron's last completed letter—another, to his sister, having been left unfinished. On the day on which it was written, April 9, Byron rode out with Gamba, was caught in rain, and on his return complained of rheumatic pains and feverishness. Two days later Parry thought him so ill that he persuaded him to agree to leave Missolonghi for a change of air and scene at Zante. Preparations were made for departure, but a gale sprang up, and prevented his leaving. On the 15th he was worse, and

unable to get up. On the 16th he was delirious, and on the 18th he became insensible. His last distinguishable words were "My sister—my daughter." On Monday, April 19th, 1824, in the midst of a terrific thunderstorm, he died.

His body was brought to England under the charge of Col. Stanhope in the *Florida*. On the ship's arrival in the Downs, Hobhouse—who had been the last person to say good-bye to Byron on Dover pier in 1816—boarded her, and took charge of the funeral arrangements. The body lay in state at a house in London for two days, and, burial in Westminster Abbey not being granted, was conveyed to Hucknall Torkard in Nottinghamshire (near Newstead). As, leaving the outskirts of London, the funeral procession went up Highgate Hill, Mary Shelley, looking out of a window, saw it. Later on, when nearing Nottingham, it was passed by a couple driving; they were Lady Caroline Lamb and her husband. "I am sure," Lady Caroline Lamb wrote to Murray a few days later, "I am sorry I ever said an unkind word against him." On the fourth day Hucknall Torkard was reached, and there, on July 16, 1824, the mortal remains of George Gordon Byron were buried.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

Birth of George Gordon Byron	Jan. 22, 1788
Death of his Father	1791
Enters Aberdeen Grammar School	1794
Succession to the Peerage	1798
Enters Dr. Glennie's School at Dulwich	1799
Enters Harrow	1801
Enters Trinity College, Cambridge	1805
<i>Fugitive Pieces</i>	1806
<i>Poems on Various Occasions</i>	1807
<i>Hours of Idleness</i>	1807
Takes his M.A. Degree at Cambridge	1808
<i>English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers</i>	1808
Sails from Falmouth	July 1809
Returns to England	July 1811
Death of his Mother	Aug. 1, 1811
First and Second Speech in the House of Lords	1812
<i>Childe Harold, I-II.</i>	1812
First Proposal to Miss Milbanke	1812
Third Speech in the House of Lords	1813
<i>The Giaour</i>	1813
<i>The Bride of Abydos</i>	1813
<i>The Corsair</i>	1814
<i>Lara</i>	1814
Second Proposal to Miss Milbanke	1814
Marriage	Jan. 2, 1815
<i>Hebrew Melodies</i>	1815
Birth of Augusta Ada	Dec. 10, 1815
<i>The Siege of Corinth</i>	1816
<i>Parisina</i>	1816
Lady Byron leaves London	Jan. 15, 1816
Byron leaves England	April 24, 1816
At Geneva	1816
Settles in Venice	1816
<i>Prisoner of Chillon</i>	1816
<i>Childe Harold, III</i>	1816

Birth of Allegra	1817
<i>Manfred</i>	1817
<i>The Lament of Tasso</i>	1817
<i>Childe Harold, IV</i>	1818
<i>Beppo</i>	1818
Meets the Countess Guiccioli	1819
<i>Mazeppa</i>	1819
At Ravenna	1819
<i>Don Juan, I and II</i>	1819
<i>Marino Faliero</i>	1820
Moves to Pisa	1821
<i>Sardanapalus</i>	1821
<i>The Two Foscari</i>	1821
<i>Cain</i>	1821
<i>Don Juan, III-V</i>	1821
Death of Allegra	April 1822
Moves to Albaro, near Genoa	1822
<i>Werner</i>	1822
<i>Don Juan, VI-XIV</i>	1823
Contributions to the <i>Liberal</i>	1823
Sails from Genoa	July 15, 1823
At Cephalonia and Metaxata	1823
Sails for Missolonghi	Dec. 28, 1823
<i>Don Juan, XV and XVI</i>	1824
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